

**CEPPS**  
**Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening**



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**CEPPS Quarterly Report: January 1, 2011 to March 31, 2011**

**NEPAL: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes**  
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**IFES: Total budget: \$9,478,000 Expenses to date: \$883,569**

**NDI: Total budget: \$14,422,000 Expenses to date: \$975,143**

**Total budget: \$23,900,000 Expenses to date: \$1,858,712**

This cover memorandum accompanies the detailed reports submitted by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) of the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the “Nepal: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes” program:

**I. POLITICAL CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES**

Nepal is undergoing a critical and historic period of political transition. The completion of the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections in April 2008 marked the beginning of the country’s course in drafting a new constitution and solidifying peace after a decade-long civil war. Major political stakeholders anticipate that the drafting process will lay out a new federal government structure more representative than the current centralized system.

However, the country’s political environment has become increasingly unstable and the constitution drafting process has been slow. The poor performance of political parties and the lack of consensus within parliament have fed the loss of public confidence in multi-party politics. Nepalis have characterized parties as being disconnected from citizen concerns outside of Kathmandu, unable to deliver on electoral campaign promises, and beset with corruption and opaque internal processes. In the CA, which acts as an interim parliament, negotiations of political arrangements have been difficult both in the aftermath of a socially and politically destabilizing civil war. In addition, nearly a third of all members are new to elected office and lack the knowledge, skills and resources to fulfill their mandates. Civic engagement within the political process is uneven, and the culture of monitoring and holding political leaders accountable is underdeveloped.

With the adoption of a new constitution by the CA, elections will be held in the near future to choose representatives to a successor legislature and new sub-national governance structures. The legitimacy of such institutions will be critical in managing tensions associated with diverse ethnicities, castes, and political groupings in Nepali society. This underscores the importance of an electoral process that is publicly viewed as credible and that involves the meaningful participation of voters and citizens. Effective public participation in these processes will be critical in determining the legitimacy of the new constitution, the government that is formed in its wake, and the future of country's political stability.

The CEPPS partners have identified the following challenges, organized by program component that will be addressed through this program:

#### Promote and Strengthen Broader Political Processes

- Organizational weaknesses and the poor governance record of Nepali political parties have led to a loss of public confidence in a multiparty system of democracy.
- Political parties lack internal democratic practices that encourage local party branches and members, including women youth and marginalized groups, to participate in the development of positions on policy issues.
- Political parties lack organized and transparent resource mobilization, and have difficulties in membership recruitment and retention.
- Political parties lack the institutional ability to formulate policy solutions and engage constituents and non-governmental stakeholders in public policy discussions.
- Organizational weaknesses have contributed to the parties' poor electoral preparation and performance. The lack of understanding of citizen concerns and priorities have resulted in party platforms and campaign strategies that were neither relevant nor compelling.
- In preparing for previous elections, candidate selection processes were not transparent, and candidates were not fully aware of their respective parties' policy positions.
- Political parties lack the capacity to plan and organize effective electoral campaigns, and are short on technical and practical resources to conduct campaigns in a competitive political environment.
- There is an underdeveloped culture within civil society and the media of monitoring the activities of political parties.

#### Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

- While the CA election of 2008 was praised a credible electoral process and well managed by the ECN, as expected in the first post-conflict election in a country with as many challenges as Nepal, there were shortcomings and irregularities in the electoral process (voter registration process, limitations of the voter education program, lack of a clear election disputes resolution mechanism).
- In an ongoing spirit of collaboration and transparency, in the post-election period, the ECN undertook a series of post-election evaluations with stakeholders at a national and local level. During the coming years, it will be crucial to maintain the ECN's credibility and build on its institutional capacity to remain a strong pillar in Nepal's ongoing march from war to peace and from a monarchy to a Federal Democratic Republic.
- Although the 2008 general elections were mostly free of violence and administered without widespread problems, shortcomings in Nepal's election process persist, including: problems with the voter list and registration process; interference from some election and government officials; abuse of state resources for campaign purposes; and an inadequate process to resolve election complaints.

- Given the performance of civil society during previous elections, domestic monitoring groups and the media could play a stronger role in observing the elections and fostering greater transparency and fairness in the electoral process.

#### Improve the democratic functioning of the Constituent Assembly (CA)/Parliament

- Previous parliaments and the current Constituent Assembly have not been effective in their outreach and representation functions.
- There is a shortage of CA members that with the technical expertise to draft and review proposed legislation.
- With the promulgation of the new constitution and the anticipated shift to a federal system of government, it is likely that many newly elected members will have little or no experience in serving as elected representatives.
- Key bodies within parliament institutions are understaffed and under-resourced. The Parliament Secretariat lacks adequate technical knowledge and material resources to effectively support the legislative process.
- The CA/Parliament conducts few committee hearings and does not have a formalized public consultation process. Little interaction exists between members of the CA/Parliament and their constituents, and this lack of interface breeds gaps in government responsiveness to citizen needs, citizen inclusion in public policy development and the accountability of officials and their use of public resources.
- There is little public information on the latest developments in the constitutional development process and the work of the legislature.

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

The program aims to strengthen political parties, electoral and legislative processes in Nepal. To this end, IFES and NDI would be working to achieve the following specific objectives:

### **IFES**

- Ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal.
- Improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building
- Expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate's understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process.
- Closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the Election Commission's internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders.
- Provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

### **NDI**

- Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance.

Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organizational structures and operations

Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties

- Strengthen the capacity of citizen oversight of the electoral process.

Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections

Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process

- Support the institutional strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/ Parliament and improve its capacity to address constituent needs.

Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the legislature

Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents

### **III. ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance**

##### *Effective Political Party Organizing and Outreach*

NDI completed the first draft of a political party baseline assessment report, used to design targeted technical assistance to parties, and presented its findings to party representatives. The Institute designed individual trainings plans for each party for the next 12-months of the program. The plans are a combination of a series of national and regional level trainings of trainers (TOTs), as well as individual consultations and workshops with each party based on a priority issue they had identified.

IPWA members, with technical support from NDI, established sub-committees in seven districts and organized a three-day capacity building training for nearly 300 women activists on women's leadership development.

##### *Cross Party Consensus Building*

NDI built on the interest and momentum within the parties to create an inter-party dialogue mechanism, called the Inter Party Alliance (IPA). NDI also finalized its TOR with the parties and outlined an action plan for the coming year.

##### *Building the Investigative Skills of Journalists to Monitor and Report on Party Activities*

Internews partner Freedom Forum sponsored a convention in Kathmandu for journalists on the subject of Nepal's Right to Information Act and conducted a needs assessment of journalists to determine the curriculum for future journalism training courses.

##### *Building Party Capacity for Campaign Strategy Development, Planning and Implementation*

#### **B. Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants**

##### *Technical Assistance to the ECN in the Legal, Management and Technical Aspects of Elections*

During this reporting period IFES has provided significant technical and capacity building support to the ECN and other stakeholders in the development, sharing and public review of concept papers

for electoral management body, electoral dispute resolution, and electoral systems sections of a new draft electoral law. IFES has also assisted the ECN in the drafting and review of the first draft of the ECN's proposed political party law. Regional workshops for stakeholders covering electoral systems, electoral management bodies and election dispute resolution were held in Nepalgunj, Pokhara and Biratnagar.

### *Strengthen ECN's Electoral Management Capacity*

During this reporting period, IFES played a pivotal role in the implementation of Phase 2 of the voter registration program, providing significant technical and capacity building support. This support has been particularly crucial for the operational effectiveness of the voter registration process and has included the support of the cascaded training program and the development and production of 15 different products, some in multiple languages, for a total of 33 deliverables, ranging from administrative forms for the voter registration process, to a portfolio of professional training materials and a range of motivating voter education products.

### *Capacity Building*

IFES has used day-to-day discussions with ECN staff and meetings with political party and civil society stakeholders to provide information on international examples of good practice in electoral legal frameworks. IFES has provided international examples and commentaries on legal frameworks for political party law and electoral management bodies to ECN counterparts. Discussions with IFES on this information have significantly increased knowledge of international good practice.

IFES' team has worked with the ECN to build an understanding of the importance of developing focused and targeted messages and using different messages and visuals for specific target audiences, as well as thinking creatively about how to use different vehicles to promote voter education messages.

### *Expand and Improve Delivery of Voter Education*

Whilst the current ECN voter education team is comprised of staff members who are dealing with electoral matters for the first time and have no public information/media background or experience, the appointment last reporting period of a Joint Secretary who is solely responsible for voter education and training for voter registration, has made a significant improvement to the planning and approval of voter education activities and the receptiveness of ECN staff to capacity-building support in this area. During this reporting period, IFES worked with the ECN to develop targeted 20 second and 45 second TV PSAs and 30 second radio PSAs in addition to key voter education materials.

### *Strengthen Capacity of Citizen Oversight of the Electoral Process*

## **C. Support the Institutional Strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and Improve its Capacity to Address Constituent Needs**

### *Strengthening the Legislative Drafting and Oversight Capacity of Parliament*

NDI held a residential workshop for the committee chairs, committee secretaries and staff members of the Parliament Secretariat to discuss committee activities, practices and challenges and to identify general areas where NDI's assistance might be needed.

### *Strengthening the Capacity of the Parliamentary Secretariat*

The Asia Foundation continued its support of the legislature in developing a five-year library improvement plan. Following a meeting with the secretary general of the Constituent Assembly, TAF worked with Krishna Mani Bhandari, the Chief Librarian of Tribhuvan University, to evaluate the current status of the parliament secretariat library and craft the improvement plan.

### *Promoting Dialogue Between Elected Members and Their Constituencies*

On January 17, NDI held a meeting with the nine CA members from the three constituency office districts of Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur to discuss challenges and lessons learned.

NDI formally signed a contract agreement with local partner Pro Public as its logistics partner to implement public hearings, community dialogues and round table discussions in 10 targeted districts. NDI and Pro Public then selected one out of five short-listed NGOs, based on criteria agreed upon last quarter, in each of the 10 districts

### *Supporting Greater Public Awareness and Engagement in the Work of Parliament*

The Asia Foundation worked with local partner NGOs Samudayak Sarathi (SS), Rural Community Development Service Council (RCDESC), and WomenAct (WA) to conduct the first-wave of youth and women focused town hall meetings to discuss legislative agendas in 45 municipalities across Nepal.

Following a meeting with the secretary general of the Constituent Assembly, TAF initiated consultation with Binod Bhattarai of The Writing Workshop to outline the framework to conduct a needs assessment study of the media center of the parliament. TAF also worked with Interface Nepal to design and broadcast four episodes of a 30-minute radio program titled "*Hamro Kanoon*" from 25 different FM radio stations, ensuring an adequate.

## **IV. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Foreign Assistance Indicators</b>	<b>IFES</b>	<b>NDI</b>	<b>Quarter Total</b>	<b>FY11 Total</b>
Number of individuals who received USG-assisted political party training.	N/A	18	18	
Number of domestic election observers trained with USG assistance.	N/A	0	0	
Number of laws or amendments to ensure credible elections drafted with USG technical assistance	0	N/A	0	
Number of USG-assisted public sessions held regarding proposed changes to the country's legal framework	3	N/A	3	
Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote electoral reform and/or improvements in the electoral system.	13	N/A	13	
Number of electoral administration procedures and systems strengthened with USG assistance.	1	N/A	1	
Number of electoral officials trained with USG assistance	435	N/A	435	

Number of national legislators and national legislative staff attending USG sponsored training or educational events.	N/A	0	0	
Number of public forums resulting from USG assistance in which national legislators and members of the public interact.	N/A	0	0	

## V. EVALUATION

### Success Stories

Due to IFES having been able to provide significant financial support to the voter registration process and IFES' staff having worked extremely closely with ECN counterparts, the added value of IFES' involvement in the process this reporting period has been clearly demonstrated. As a result, IFES has continued to establish and maintain some excellent relationships and allies within the ECN and has significantly increased the trust of the ECN, with staff members becoming far more receptive to IFES' technical and capacity-building support. IFES will consolidate on these welcome developments in the next quarter and continue to work with the ECN to improve its operational planning and effectiveness.

The Institute built on the interest and momentum generated from its work with parties on their party assessments to create an inter-party dialogue mechanism, the Inter Party Alliance (IPA). The IPA is an alliance of eight major political parties, with influential central committee members from each party playing leading roles in the Alliance. The group finalized their TOR and outlined an action plan detailing the various topics and issues they would like to address and skills workshops they would like to conduct. The IPA will generate a significant framework for the discussion among political parties of a number of contentious and significant issues that are important in the democratization process of Nepal, including but not limited to political party and electoral law, political party code of conduct, coalition-building and party transparency and inclusiveness.

### Lessons Learned

The constituent service office (CSO) program review meeting conducted this quarter showed that the CSO of the one-member district (Arghakhanchi) and two-member district (Lalitpur) worked well. However, the multi-member district (Dhanusha) has had some problems. Some of the reasons identified for this were lack of coordination among parliamentarians from various political parties, a lack of commitment on the part of the parliamentarians towards the office, and parliamentarians who are primarily based in Kathmandu and did not visit the office with any frequency. Therefore, a consultation meeting was organized with CA members to develop strategies to improve its effectiveness. The discussion was instrumental in collecting valuable recommendations from the parliamentarians. In addition, there was a renewed commitment and interest from the CA members, a pledge to be more cooperative, and a realization of the significant asset the CSO is to the Dhanusha representatives. Following the consultation meeting, they began to visit the office more frequently.

### Challenges

IFES' work undertaken with the ECN this quarter has been extremely intense and challenging due to the ECN's decision to launch Phase 2 of the voter registration program within a very tight timeframe. Whilst there is no doubt of the major contribution made by and success of IFES' technical and financial support during this reporting period, the ECN continues to face significant

problems with its internal planning and data management associated with the voter registration program.

The lack of a coherent ECN strategy to register the potentially large numbers of people who will not be registered at the conclusion of Phases 1 and 2 of voter registration and the lack of ECN operational planning and capacities for the back-end integration, verification, cleaning and voter list production from the voter data collected in the field create a significant challenge to be addressed by ECN

IFES has faced some recruitment challenges for key personnel this quarter. The Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant left with no notice early in the reporting period and recruitment of a replacement has been difficult due to lack of suitable available candidates.

As the priority of the nation shifted more toward writing a new constitution, the entire legislative process including the committees' work slowed down. This has hindered NDI's coordination with the Parliament Secretariat. Lack of availability of the secretariat staff, more so of the Secretary General, has impacted the formation of the Parliamentary Steering Committee and other plans of implementation.

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

### **Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance**

NDI will complete the final draft of the *Political Party Baseline Assessment Report*.

NDI will organize a seven-day multiparty national TOT-Phase I in Kathmandu.

NDI will The Institute will facilitate a two-day skills-building residential workshop to IPA board members about consensus-building on presidential, prime ministerial and hybrid systems.

IN partner Antenna Foundation will conduct four investigative journalism workshops.

### **Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants**

During the next reporting period, IFES will review and participate in public discussions of political party bill and electoral bill drafts. IFES will continue to provide technical and capacity building support to the ECN for the implementation of Phase 2 of the voter registration program and provide assistance with the preparation of a second voter registration drive in municipalities.

IFES will work with the ECN BRIDGE team to develop and implement training programs for political party representatives, media representatives, and a train-the-trainer program focusing on increasing the number of female BRIDGE trainers in Nepal. IFES will also work with the Nepal BRIDGE partners (World Bank, DanidaHUGOU and International IDEA) and the international facilitation team to develop and implement a pilot seven-day Democracy and Governance BRIDGE program.

In early May IFES will organize a complementary two-day electoral workshop in Washington DC as part of the UNDP funded ECN five-member delegation study trip to IFE in Mexico.



In the third quarter, IFES will select and begin implementation of sub-awards with local civil society organizations to facilitate the delivery of voter education campaigns for marginalized and less likely to register sectors of the population for Phase 2 of the voter registration program, as well as the ongoing continuous voter registration process.

**Support the Institutional Strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and Improve its Capacity to Address Constituent Needs**

NDI will hold a workshop for the NGO representatives of the 10 targeted districts to orient them on how to effectively implement the public hearings and community dialogue program. Topics will include moderation skills, the organization of public hearings and community dialogues, and ways to correspond and engage with representatives.

NDI and Pro Public will conduct the first round of public hearings and community dialogues in 10 districts.

NDI will organize constituency outreach events in the three constituency offices in Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur.

TAF will complete the five-year library development plan in the coming quarter and initiate strategic involvement based on the recommendations provided by the research consultant and the funds allocated under CEPPS.

TAF will complete the needs assessment of the Legislative Parliament's media center in the coming quarter and initiate strategic involvement in providing technical and material assistance as identified by the research consultant and the funds allocated under CEPPS.

**International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)**  
**Quarterly Report**  
**January –March 2011**

**Project Dates: August 03, 2010 – August 31, 2015**  
**Total budget: \$9,478,000 Expenses to date: \$883,569**

**I. SUMMARY**

This reporting period continued to be characterized by political uncertainty as political parties struggle to finalize the new Constitution in time for the 28 May, 2011 deadline. Although progress has been made by the thematic committees to resolve many of the issues, a continued absence of understanding on the most crucial issues such as the form of government, the electoral system and delineation of federal provinces have made the promulgation of the new Constitution within the May, 2011 deadline unlikely. Furthermore, in spite of the election of a new prime minister, Madhav Kumar Khanal, on 3 February after 17 failed attempts, fractious internal dynamics within political parties have prevented the formation of a new government.

Due to the lack of resolution by the Supreme Court at the beginning of the reporting period as to which documents could be used as proof of eligibility to register, the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) embarked on a voter registration “*bridging*” program on 27 January, 2011 with citizenship certificates being required as proof of eligibility. This involved the use of materials, staff and equipment already in the field to begin registering voters in Village Development Committees (VDCs) in the districts in which municipalities had been covered in Phase 1 of the program. On 7 February, the Supreme Court issued its written judgment that the use of citizenship certificates as the sole proof of citizenship was mandatory. As a result, the ECN (and by association IFES) embarked on an intense and challenging period of preparation for the implementation of Phase 2 of the voter registration program in VDCs, with enumeration beginning on 29 March, 2011.

IFES has played a pivotal role in the implementation of Phase 2 of the voter registration program, providing significant financial and technical and capacity building support in the areas of training and voter education, resulting in the development and production of 15 different products, some in multiple languages, for a total of 33 deliverables, ranging from administrative forms for the voter registration process, to a portfolio of professional training materials and a range of motivating voter education products.

In terms of training, IFES provided high-level technical guidance on the development and revision of training plans and curriculum for a major nationwide cascaded training program, which will result in the training of 81,927 people. IFES facilitated and funded the training of the master trainers of this program and the subsequent trainings held for administrative staff and computer operators at the regional level. In order to improve the effectiveness of the training IFES worked in collaboration with the ECN to design and produce a portfolio of high quality training materials, which included enumeration handbooks, registration handbooks and a training manual and video. In addition to producing these materials, the ECN asked for IFES’ immediate assistance with the printing of crucial administrative forms and directives, specifically five million enumeration forms, 15,000 voter list registration books, 25,000 voter list record books and 35,000 copies of the ECN’s voter registration directives.

With regard to voter education, IFES has worked closely with the ECN’s voter education team to produce a range of motivating and compelling voter education materials. These include a 20 second

motivational TV PSA targeting youth; a 45 second informational TV PSA with a strong youth, inter-ethnic and broader general public appeal; and a 30 second generic radio PSA in Nepali and 16 local languages. IFES has funded an intensive month of broadcasting both the TV and radio PSAs, to coincide with the launch of Phase 2 of the voter registration program. In addition to this, at the request of the ECN, IFES provided financial and technical support with the development of one-day, interactive, district level stakeholder interaction events with the aim of facilitating stakeholder support for the voter registration process at the district-level. Finally, following a competitive tendering process IFES has assessed and is in the process of short-listing 75 project proposals from civil society organizations targeting marginalized and less likely to register sectors of the population.

This support has been particularly crucial for the operational effectiveness of the voter registration process. Having been able to provide such crucial support and having worked closely with ECN counterparts, IFES has established an increased trust of the ECN, with staff members becoming far more receptive to IFES' technical and capacity-building support.

In addition to its support of the voter registration process, IFES has also continued its ongoing programmatic work. Working with the ECN BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections) team, the 2011 *Elections* BRIDGE calendar has been finalized and a program of pioneering weekly BRIDGE tutorials instigated. IFES has also taken a lead role in facilitating *Democracy and Governance* BRIDGE in Nepal, with funding from the Australian Election Commission and in-country funding from the World Bank. Nepal has been selected as one of the pilot countries for this new program's trial implementation. Finally, IFES' electoral legal reform work continues, with IFES providing ongoing day-to-day technical advice to the ECN in the development of the draft political party law and the outline for the electoral law, and funding three regional workshops on draft electoral law issues.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### ***Political Update***

This reporting period continued to be characterized by political uncertainty as political parties struggle to finalize the new Constitution in time for the 28 May, 2011 deadline. Senior political leaders have indicated that the deadline may be extended yet again; the term of office of the Constituent Assembly (CA), was extended in May 2010 owing to a lack of political consensus. So far, 11 thematic committees including 47 sub-committees and 18 taskforces have resolved 63 out of 68 issues specified in their terms of reference which have been further incorporated into draft provisions of the Constitution. Nevertheless, absence of understanding on the most crucial issues such as the form of government, the electoral system, delineation of federal provinces, and the arrangement for the transitional period have made the promulgation of the new Constitution within the May 2011 deadline unlikely. A significant development on 22 March, was the Prachanda-led sub-committee of the Constitutional Committee agreeing that in the period between the promulgation of the new Constitution and any subsequent elections, current constitutional entities such as the Office of the President, Vice President, the Council of Ministers and other constitutional bodies, would continue to function legitimately until such time that elections brought new structures and leaders into place. This has important implications in that any dissolution of the CA, as some groups are agitating for, will not affect the structure and continued work of constitutionally-mandated bodies.

During this reporting period, a major political development was the election of a new prime minister after 8 months of political stalemate and wrangling. After 17 failed attempts since the

resignation of Madhav Kumar Nepal in June 2010, a fresh process to elect a prime minister was instigated in January 2011 with new rules of procedures that forbid CA members to remain neutral in the prime ministerial vote. As a result, the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) Chairman Jhal Nath Khanal was elected as the new prime minister on 3 February, 2011 with a majority of 368 votes defeating the Nepali Congress and Madhesi Janadhikar Forum's candidates (122 and 67 votes respectively). Khanal was supported by CPN/UML and the largest party in the CA – the United Communist Party of Nepal- Maoist (UCPN-Maoist) as well as other smaller parties. Despite this positive development, political parties have still not been able to decide on a full cabinet two months after the election of the new prime minister, with fractious internal dynamics within political parties preventing Prime Minister Khanal from forming a new government.

On 16 January, 2011 the UN mission closed as scheduled. Since UNMIN's departure, monitoring of the Maoist combatants and arms (a role previously undertaken by UNMIN) has been carried out by the Special Committee (comprising of 64 members of the army, police, the armed police force and the Maoists). Although UNMIN's departure has not had an immediate dramatic effect on the peace process, key decisions on the management of the arms and armies and the future of the 19,000 Maoist combatants in cantonments remains unresolved. This is a pivotal issue to the peace process and the long-term impact of the absence of UNMIN as a driving force to resolve these important issues and bring disparate actors together, remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, although the Supreme Court lifted the order restraining the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) from registering voters at the end of the last reporting period, the interim order restraining the ECN from implementing its policy of allowing proof of eligibility other than a citizenship certificate remained in place. On 7 February, the Supreme Court issued its written judgment that the provision of the 2007 Voters Roll Act, which allows documents other than a citizenship certificate to be used as proof of eligibility to register was flawed, and that a citizenship certificate is the sole proof of citizenship and thus mandatory as the sole proof of eligibility to register to vote. In spite of the Supreme Court ruling, the ECN is still likely to face political challenges. The Limbuwan Front – an ethnic militant outfit, has already warned that it would disrupt the ECN's programs in 12 districts, and it is still likely that Madhesi-parties could continue to disrupt the voter registration program in VDCs in the Terai as they have done in municipalities.

In addition to its major undertaking to implement the voter registration program, the ECN continues its process of developing new electoral laws to enable 'free and fair' elections following the promulgation of the new Constitution.

### ***Program Objectives***

Under the Consortium of Elections and Political Strengthening (CEPPS III), IFES activities will support one of the three principal objectives as detailed by USAID: 2) Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants and sub-objectives:

- A) Strengthen democratic legal framework
- B) Strengthen the ECN's electoral management capacity and
- C) Expand and improve delivery of voter education

In support of the above, IFES will achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal.
- To improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building.
- To expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate's understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process.
- To closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the ECN's internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders.
- To provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

### **III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

#### **1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework**

During this reporting period IFES has provided significant technical and capacity building support to the ECN and other stakeholders in the development, sharing and public review of concept papers for electoral management body, electoral dispute resolution, and electoral systems sections of a new draft electoral law. IFES has also assisted the ECN in the drafting and review of the first draft of the ECN's proposed political party law. Regional workshops for stakeholders covering electoral systems, electoral management bodies and election dispute resolution were held in Nepalgunj, Pokhara and Biratnagar.

##### *Activity 1.1 – Technical Assistance*

*Summary:* IFES has continued to collaborate with the ECN in further refining concept papers for the election management body, electoral dispute resolution, and electoral systems components of a new electoral law.

IFES' two programs for electoral law reform, one funded under CEPPS III and one funded by the Norwegian government, continue to collaborate closely to maximize coordinated technical inputs and public review opportunities. During the current reporting period IFES CEPPS III program was responsible for reviewing the draft political party law and electoral law outline prepared by the Norwegian funded IFES program and funded for the ECN three regional workshops on electoral law issues at which consultants to the Norwegian funded IFES program were the key presenters.

IFES has continued to engage a highly regarded Nepali legal drafter, Kailash Prasad Subedi, to work under Norwegian funding with IFES' Norwegian-funded consultant, Kare Vollen, in advising the ECN, stakeholders and the electoral law drafting subcommittee on the concept papers and drafts of the political party and electoral laws. The IFES Country Director has also continued to provide advice to the ECN on electoral legal reform issues.

During this reporting period IFES supported three two-day regional public review workshops held by the ECN on concept papers for the electoral management body and election dispute resolution segments of the electoral law, and on potential electoral systems. The workshops were held in Nepalgunj on 17-18 February 2011, in Pokhara on 24-25 February, and Biratnagar on 22-23 March. A total of 125 senior regional representatives of political parties, CSOs and government institutions attended these workshops as did ECN members and the ECN legal management team. Relevant outputs from the workshops' discussions have been noted for consideration by ECN when drafting these segments of the law.

*Results:* Ongoing day-to-day technical advice to the ECN in the development of the draft political party law and the outline for the electoral law. Finalization of a first draft of the ECN's proposed political party law. Holding of public consultation workshops in three regional locations resulting in inputs from a wide range of knowledgeable and influential stakeholders on electoral management body, election dispute resolution and electoral systems issues.

### *Activity 1.2 – Capacity Building*

*Summary:* IFES has used day-to-day discussions with ECN staff and meetings with political party and civil society stakeholders to provide information on international examples of good practice in electoral legal frameworks. During this period IFES has provided international examples and commentaries on legal frameworks for political party law and electoral management bodies to ECN counterparts. Discussions with IFES on this information have significantly increased knowledge of international good practice. There have been no meetings of the ECN's legal drafting subcommittee during this reporting period.

*Results:* Increased knowledge of the ECN's legal department, civil society and political party stakeholders of international good practices in legal frameworks for political parties and electoral management bodies.

## **2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN**

During this reporting period, IFES played a pivotal role in the implementation of Phase 2 of the voter registration program, providing significant technical and capacity building support. This support has been particularly crucial for the operational effectiveness of the voter registration process and has included the support of the cascaded training program and the development and production of 15 different products, some in multiple languages, for a total of 33 deliverables, ranging from administrative forms for the voter registration process, to a portfolio of professional training materials and a range of motivating voter education products (see section 3).

### *Activity 2.1 – Technical Assistance*

*Summary:* The ECN has split the voter registration with photo program into three phases. In each phase the ECN had planned two parts, with voter registration equipment and trained staff consecutively covering two wards in each municipality/district. As of 31 January 2011, the ECN

announced it had “completed” the first phase of the voter registration program for 58 municipalities in 43 districts, registering 1,291,347 people (this includes people registered through continuous registration), approximately 75% of the ECN’s estimated voters (the ECN’s estimates of voters for municipalities is 75% of those registered for the 2008 Constituent Assembly election - a relatively low figure when compared to population census estimated projections). Voter registration was completed in 46 municipalities, and was partially completed in 12 municipalities due to the ongoing boycotts of the voter registration process by three Madhes-based parties and the Federal Limbuwan State Council. In the “completed” municipalities, voters can still register at the district election offices. As at 31 January, in most municipalities fewer than 5 people per day were using the continuous voter registration facility. Since that date the ECN has not been collecting data on continuous voter registration in municipalities.

At the beginning of this reporting period, due to the issue of which documents could be used as proof of eligibility to register not having been resolved, the ECN continued its preparation for a voter registration “*bridging*” program. This program used equipment, materials and staff already in the field to register voters in VDCs within the same districts containing the municipalities covered during registration Phase 1. Implementation of the “bridging” program began on 27 January 2011 with citizenship certificates being required as proof of eligibility. By the end of the reporting period, 719,498 people had registered in 286 VDCs of 43 districts in which the “*bridging*” program was conducted. Overall, this is estimated by the ECN to be 55.63% of the number of voters on the voters register for these VDCs for the 2008 Constituent Assembly election.

On 7 February 2011, the Supreme Court issued the judgment from its January 2011 decision that the provision of the 2007 Voters Roll Act which allows documents other than a citizen certificate to be used as proof of eligibility to register, was flawed, and that citizenship certificates were the sole proof of citizenship and thus mandatory as proof of eligibility to register to vote. As a result, whilst running the “*bridging*” program in parallel, the ECN began urgent preparations for implementation of Phase 2 of the voter registration program on this basis, with enumeration scheduled to begin on 29 March 2011 and registration on 31 March 2011.

For Phase 2, the ECN estimated the number of voters to be registered in all the VDCs of the 75 districts as 9,188,199 and the ECN has set a target date for registration to be completed by mid-June 2011. The estimate of voters represents 50% of those on the voters list for the 2008 Constituent Assembly election in ‘mountain’ VDCs, and 60% in other VDCs. These estimates are considered to be low by agencies supporting the ECN, and the ECN has stated that they are driven by financial rather than demographic considerations.

The ECN’s voter registration methodology for Phase 2 is based on each district setting its own timetable for progressively covering VDCs in the district. Registration places will stay open for a limited time in each VDC, according to the estimated number of voters, as was the case for the “*bridging*” program. This may or not be sufficient time to register all eligible voters in a VDC, as in the majority of cases registration places will be open for only one day after enumeration finishes. It may be particularly difficult for those without a citizenship certificate to obtain this in time to register.

For Phase 2, the ECN has implemented a number of policy changes. Firstly, the ECN has determined that a person not living at the address shown on his/her citizenship certificate, could register for an address that a letter from their VDC or municipality secretariat states is their current permanent address (previously a migration certificate, or house/property ownership certificate, or utility bill was required as proof of residence). This may go some way to enabling those who have

moved from the address shown on their citizenship certificate to register to vote. Secondly, in order to facilitate the engagement of local stakeholders, Local Support and Coordination Committees will operate at the district and VDC levels to assist the ECN with information/education. Thirdly, enumerators will work singly, rather than in pairs, as was the case for Phase 1 and the “*bridging*” program. And finally, training for enumerators and registration place managers has been reduced from two days to one day.

In order to prepare for and implement Phase 2 effectively, within a very tight timeframe, the ECN called on IFES for high-level support in the areas of material production, training and voter education (see section 3).

### Voter Registration Training Materials

In order to help ensure the effectiveness of the ECN’s cascaded training program for Phase 2 of the voter registration process, which involves the training of 81,927 people, IFES worked in close collaboration with the ECN, providing management oversight and high level technical guidance, to finalize and produce a portfolio of high quality training materials. Versions of these materials had been developed with IFES assistance, but not approved for issue by ECN, in the last reporting period. Substantial and time-consuming multiple revisions of these materials were now required of IFES, as the ECN made continual changes to its operational practices and later its policies for voter registration. These materials included an enumeration handbook for enumerators and stakeholders, a registration handbook for use in the registration place, focusing on computer operators, a training manual for trainers, with all training lesson plans and content and a 25 minute management training video and summary 5-minute video, providing a user-friendly audio visual tool for trainers and registration staff. All materials are available upon request.

In February 2011, IFES secured quotations from local printing companies to print 82,000 copies of the enumeration handbook, 13,000 copies of the registration handbook, 3,000 copies of the trainers’ guide and 250 DVD copies of the 25 minute voter registration video. In spite of extremely tight deadlines and continual changes by the ECN to the content of the materials, even after text and layout approved by the ECN had been sent to printing houses for production, IFES, working in close collaboration with the printing companies, was able to ensure the design, production and delivery of all the products in time to comply with the ECN’s distribution schedule.

The materials were distributed to the district-level on Armed Police Force trucks in five waves, with the first dispatch on 18 March 2011 and the last on 26 March 2011. The training video was loaded onto all the laptops before dispatch to districts in March and DVDs were sent to all 75 districts for use at district level and for uploading on all computers already in the field. At the end of the reporting period, the ECN advised that all materials had been delivered in all but the 2 most remote of the 75 districts. The ECN and IFES were delighted with the products, which are of a very high quality. Feedback received from the recipients of the training materials has been very positive.

### Voter Registration Administrative Materials

In addition to the above-mentioned training materials, in late February and early March 2011 IFES was requested by the ECN to provide immediate assistance with the printing of a number of crucial administrative forms and directives. This was substantially due to the ECN having allowed insufficient time to undertake its own procurements under the Government of Nepal’s procurement process. As a result, IFES at the eleventh hour had to tender for and closely oversee the production of 5 million enumeration forms, 15,000 voter list registration books, 25,000 voter list record books



and 35,000 copies of the ECN's voter registration directives. In addition to the simultaneous printing of training materials, this proved to be immensely challenging for both IFES and the printers due to a number of factors: the administrative workload placed on IFES Nepal and IFES DC to undertake the procurement process within such a short timeframe; the splitting of tasks between several printers so as to attempt to meet the ECN's very ambitious delivery schedule; the intensive print quality control and on-site monitoring at multiple locations required from IFES staff; electricity and paper shortages; the very limited printing capacity available in Nepal; and the technical challenges for the outdated print production facilities available in Nepal of the printing of the enumeration forms, whose two parts had each to be sequentially numbered and accurately separated by a perforation.

Due to the volume and importance of the production of the training and administrative materials, IFES recruited a national print production consultant to provide management oversight and monitor the production of the materials. This support proved to be invaluable, and in spite of the odds, IFES was able to ensure the delivery of all the materials to the ECN in time for the materials to be dispatched in accordance with the ECN's distribution schedule. Due to the ECN being adamant that delivery on time was more important than quality, for a small percentage of the enumeration forms there were some quality issues. Even so, overall quality was higher than for those which ECN had itself contracted to print for Phase 1 of registration. IFES highlighted these issues well in advance to the ECN to ensure that it can take the necessary measures to mitigate any resulting problems.

#### Cascaded Training of Voter Registration Staff

IFES' national training officer, Radhika Regmi, worked in close cooperation with the ECN training section to provide high level technical guidance on the development and revision of training plans and curriculum for the cascaded training program, which will result in the training of 81,927 people working in support of the voter registration program at the national, regional, district and VDC levels.

IFES facilitated and funded training in Kathmandu for 14 master administrative trainers on 9 to 10 March, and for 11 master computer trainers on 9 to 13 March. These master trainers then conducted trainer training sessions in 5 regional centers – Biratnagar, Dhulikel, Pokhara, Nepalgunj and Dhangadi – for 333 DEOs, Assistant DEOs, resource persons and computer staff - on 13 to 14 March for 214 administrative staff, and on 13 to 17 March for 119 computer staff. IFES funded and provided logistical support for these regional trainings and recruited a team of 10 administrative and finance support staff to oversee the administrative, logistical and financial aspects of these trainings, working in close cooperation with the ECN. This worked very effectively.

Training at district and VDC/resource centre level for 81,597 registration staff was timetabled by the ECN to commence from 21 March, with the first batches of local registration place staff to be trained on 24 March and enumerators on 25 March. On 17 March, the Chief Election Commissioner determined that training in districts and lower levels would be postponed by the relevant DEOs until training and voter registration materials had been delivered. This training was subsequently commenced at the end of March. Training for local level registration staff and enumerators will continue through to May 2011, with clusters of VDCs being trained progressively. ECN has not compiled any data on the revised training dates in each district.

## Training for New District Election Officers (DEOs)

On 21 March, the ECN requested IFES support with the organization and funding of a three-day training program for the 22 new DEOs that were assigned to the ECN from 22 March. A three-day residential orientation and voter registration training of trainer session for these DEOs, plus 11 ECN HQ staff, was held in Kathmandu on 25 to 27 March. At the ECN's request, IFES' national training officer managed the curriculum and training program for this training in consultation with the ECN's training unit.

Whilst there is no doubt of the major contribution made by and success of IFES' technical and financial support during this reporting period, the ECN continues to face significant problems with its internal planning and data management associated with the voter registration program. The ECN's focus on short-term micro-planning has resulted in a continuous cycle of last-minute decision-making on critical policies and operational requirements. There are potential shortages of some essential materials, including enumeration forms, voter education print materials and ECN directives. However, the ECN has also significantly improved its training and community involvement methodologies and implementation processes since the launch of Phase 1 of registration in September 2010. The ECN has yet to address how it intends to register those potentially large numbers of eligible voters whose data has not been collected during Phase 1 and 2 of registration, or publicly verify the data collected. The ECN's ability to plan, develop, operate and sustainably maintain the IT systems required by its voter registration program continues to be a source of concern: such as the systems required to secure, transmit and integrate voter data in an effective and timely manner; and to clean, verify and produce accurate and comprehensive product from the voter registration process. UNDP and IFES will continue to work with the ECN to help improve the ECN's ability to address these issues.

*Results:* Provision of ongoing high-level technical guidance and assistance with the revision of training plans, materials and development of professional training curriculum. Production of a portfolio of high quality training materials (82,000 copies of the enumeration handbook, 13,000 copies of the registration handbook, 3,000 copies of the trainers handbook and 250 copies of a 25 minute voter registration training video, as well as a 5 minute summary video) which will support the work of 81,927 ECN staff and Local Support and Coordination Committee members working on the voter registration program. High-level technical support of the development and implementation of a cascaded training program that will result in the training of 81,927 ECN voter registration staff and Local Support and Coordination Committee members. Training facilitated and funded for 25 master administrative and computer trainers, and 333 DEOs, Assistant DEOs, resource persons and computer staff. Provision and deployment of a team of 10 trained financial and administrative support staff to support the logistical and financial aspects of these regional trainings. Fast procurement and printing oversight achieved to ensure the production of 5 million enumeration forms, 15,000 voter list registration books, 25,000 voter list record books and 35,000 copies of the voter registration directives. All training materials and administrative forms and directives printed and delivered to ECN in time to meet the ECN's distribution schedule.

## *Activity 2.2 – Capacity Building*

### Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Training

*Summary:* As part of IFES' ongoing support of the ECN's BRIDGE program, IFES continues to take the lead coordination role working with the ECN and its BRIDGE partners, UNDP and

International IDEA, to plan for and implement BRIDGE activities in support of the ECN's ongoing work.

During this reporting period, IFES worked with the ECN and the BRIDGE partners to finalize the BRIDGE calendar for 2011 (available on request). Due to the heavy workload for the ECN and IFES in March due to the launch of Phase 2 of the voter registration program, the BRIDGE course targeting political party participants was postponed until 19-21 April. IFES and the ECN BRIDGE national BRIDGE coordinator (funded by International IDEA) worked during this reporting period to develop the curriculum and materials for the *Political Parties* BRIDGE.

IFES also worked with the ECN BRIDGE team to plan and begin implementation of a pioneering series of weekly BRIDGE tutorials for ECN staff. These tutorials will focus on ECN-identified high priority electoral topics using tailored BRIDGE materials and methodology. The tutorials will provide a broad pool of ECN staff with regular training and interactions, and will also give the ECN BRIDGE facilitators an ongoing way of practicing and enhancing their BRIDGE facilitation skills. Two tutorials on Voter Information, were held in February for two groups of ECN HQ staff (37 participants in total). Participants of these tutorials included many junior and administrative ECN staff who have never received any electoral training. The feedback has been extremely positive and the tutorial program will continue in the next reporting period, having had to be put on hold in March due to intense preparations by the ECN and IFES for Phase 2 of the voter registration program. Work is underway to begin preparations for the Train-the-Trainer ten-day BRIDGE course that will happen in June 2011 to help increase the number of female BRIDGE facilitators. IFES has secured a highly recommended international BRIDGE facilitator to come to Nepal in June to take a lead role in preparing for and implementing this program.

In addition to IFES' ongoing work with *Elections'* BRIDGE, IFES has taken a lead role in coordinating with World Bank, DanidaHUGOU and International IDEA to introduce a pilot to Nepal of the recently developed *Democracy and Governance* (D&G) BRIDGE program. Negotiations were finalized this reporting period and Nepal has been selected as one of the pilot countries for the D&G BRIDGE program. The World Bank will fund the national costs associated with the pilot and the Australian Election Commission will fund the costs associated with the international facilitators. The customization program will take place from 9 -13 May, 2011, and the workshop for stakeholders (political parties, civil society, government officials, media etc) will take place in Doti, a district in the far-west of Nepal from 6-12 June, 2011,

*Results:* BRIDGE 2011 calendar finalized. Work underway to prepare the three-day curriculum and materials for the *Political Parties* BRIDGE. Development and implementation of the first of a pioneering series of weekly BRIDGE tutorials for ECN staff. Nepal selected as one of the pilot countries for the newly developed *Democracy and Governance* BRIDGE program.

### Organizational Capacity Building

*Summary:* IFES' Country and Deputy Country Director continue to provide organizational capacity building support on specific initiatives and through ongoing interactions with ECN staff. In addition, the work of IFES national training consultant, based full-time in the ECN, continues to be instrumental in demonstrating good practices in training development and management processes to often inexperienced ECN secretariat managers. Through collaborative work, collection and archiving of materials and daily professional interactions, the training capacity of individuals in the ECN has been increased, and the ECN is developing a more systematic approach to planning and implementing a cascade training program. The national training consultant has maintained an

excellent training relationship with the ECN training team and is highly valued by the training team and senior ECN management.

As has been highlighted in other sections of this report, IFES has provided significant capacity building support this reporting period in the development and implementation of a major cascaded training program for Phase 2 of the voter registration program, as well as in the development and production of highly professional training materials. IFES has also provided high-level capacity building support with the development of voter education materials for the voter registration process, as well as working with the BRIDGE team on the development of the BRIDGE program and related BRIDGE materials. In all of these areas the ECN has by in large been receptive to this capacity-building support and IFES is beginning to see improvements in working practices and outputs in these areas.

Following the training assessment carried out by UNDP at the end of 2010, IFES will continue to work with UNDP in 2011 to draft an organizational capacity building program, which will include topics such as project and budget management, project proposal writing, negotiation, operational planning etc.

Finally, at the end of the reporting period IFES issued an RFQ for a survey of 250 ECN stakeholders to be used by IFES for monitoring and evaluation purposes and to assist the ECN to identify stakeholders perception of the strengths and weaknesses in electoral management and the electoral framework in Nepal.

*Results:* More professional approaches to developing training programs and materials and voter education programs and materials are being adopted by the ECN secretariat. RFQ issued for survey of 250 ECN stakeholders.

### **3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education**

#### *Activity 3.1 Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign*

*Summary:* Whilst the current ECN voter education team is comprised of staff members who are dealing with electoral matters for the first time and have no public information/media background or experience, the appointment last reporting period of a Joint Secretary who is solely responsible for voter education and training for voter registration, has made a significant improvement to the planning and approval of voter education activities and the receptiveness of ECN staff to capacity-building support in this area.

IFES' national voter education consultant left early in the reporting period to return to his job in the President's office. A suitable replacement has yet to be employed. The IFES team, however, continued to working closely with the ECN voter education team on a daily basis and maintained an excellent working relationship. A key focus of IFES' capacity building support this reporting period has been working with the ECN to develop TV and Radio PSAs to inform citizens about the voter registration process and encourage eligible citizens to register. IFES' team has worked with the ECN to build an understanding of the importance of developing focused and targeted messages and using different messages and visuals for specific target audiences, as well as thinking creatively about how to use different vehicles to promote voter education messages.

One result of this new approach was that the ECN came up with the idea of using the Bryan Adams concert (the first major rock concert in Nepal with an international star) to promote voter education messages. IFES established a relationship with the PR company for the event and secured free ECN promotional voter educational branding in major national newspapers, as well as at the concert itself. IFES also worked with the ECN to develop a motivational 20 second TV PSA, specifically targeting young people for screening at the concert. Another was that the ECN requested IFES to assist with the development and funding of reusable tote bags carrying a voter registration message.

The ECN continued to take a more imaginative approach to voter education by requesting IFES assistance for a revised approach to the prime TV PSA. Production of the PSA had been aborted by ECN during the last reporting period due to legal uncertainties about the requirement for citizenship certificates as proof of eligibility to register. ECN requested that IFES assist it to develop a revised 45 second TV PSA using Tito Satya, creators of and actors in the highest rating television sitcom in Nepal.

As a result of IFES' voter education capacity-building work during the last reporting period, which focused on facilitating the ECN's ability to work directly with local radio companies and the establishment of an electronic database of district level local radio information, for Phase 2 of the voter registration program, the ECN developed PSAs to be tailored in local areas in the relevant local language to help promote voter education messages specific to that locality. Due to the large number of local radio stations, the ECN rather than IFES made provision for a local radio budget for each district, with the DEO having responsibility for managing the budget and liaising with the appropriate local radio stations on a media schedule. This approach has been well received by the DEOs, and complements IFES' assistance to the ECN for PSA broadcasting on nationally-based radio networks.

Finally, in order to promote voter registration and key voter education messages at the district level, the ECN requested IFES' financial and technical support with the development and implementation of a district level interaction program. This involved IFES coordinating with the DEOs and local hotels to organize a one day interactive workshop for up to 65 local stakeholders (political parties, media, CSOs, government officials) to involve them and facilitate their support of the voter registration process, particularly with regard to using their networks to promote voter education messages. Key voter registration materials were distributed at the workshop, such as the enumeration handbook and voter education materials in a specially produced IFES funded voter education bag.

IFES worked with the ECN to develop a program for the workshop (available on request). This program was promoted at the training of master trainers held in Kathmandu on 9 and 10 March. This was followed by a demonstration interaction workshop/training session for DEOs on 15 March in 5 regional centres, following their administrative training on voter registration. District level interactions were scheduled by the ECN to take place in 69 districts on 18 or 20 March. On 13 March, however, the ECN indefinitely postponed interactions in 23 districts in the Terai and Limbu areas (due to ongoing disturbances relating to the voter registration process). Another 15 were postponed to a date that allows sufficient preparation time for the DEO. At the end of the reporting period, stakeholder interactions had been held in 46 districts. IFES had collected participant data for 43 of these interactions, which shows that 2,678 stakeholders took part, 273 women and 2,405 men. At most of these workshops key local officials, such as Chief District Officers and security chiefs, participated.

The ECN has heralded these events as an important way to build stakeholder support for the program at the district level. An output of these workshops was the securing of a commitment from each stakeholder to at least one specific action identified during the workshop to assist the ECN with motivation, education and information for the voter registration process in the local area.

*Results:* Ongoing provision by IFES staff of voter education capacity building support and excellent working relationship maintained with the ECN voter education team. Capacity building support with the development of motivating and targeted 20 second and 45 second TV PSAs and 30 second radio PSAs. Creative approach to voter education adopted by the ECN voter education team resulting in free voter education branding in adverts relating to the Bryan Adams concert in major national newspapers, as well as at the concert itself. Development of local radio PSAs to be tailored in local areas in the relevant local language to help promote voter education messages specific to that locality. Financial and technical support with the development and implementation of a district level stakeholder interaction program in 46 districts resulting in stakeholder commitment to support the voter registration process and promote voter education messages. Data collected for 43 of these events, showing a participation of 2,678 stakeholders.

### *Activity 3.2 Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns*

*Summary:* Findings from IFES' survey of the pilot phase of the voter registration project carried out under CEPPS II indicated that young Nepali citizens aged between 16 and 25 had a low registration rate of around 40%, the overwhelming reason being that they did not have a citizenship certificate<sup>1</sup>. In recognition that this target group needs to be specifically addressed, the ECN, with IFES support, prepared scripts for a 20 second and 45 second TV PSA to be used to reach and motivate this important young audience, as well as the general public. The message of the PSAs was that all eligible voters need to have a citizenship certificate in order to register.

As mentioned above in section activity 3.1, a motivational 20 second PSA was developed by IFES and the ECN to specifically target youth, initially at the historic Bryan Adams concert. This 20 second PSA has been produced in English and two Nepali versions (a male and female voiceover). The Nepali version has subsequently been incorporated into the TV broadcast schedule and is being screened for a four-week period from 31 March throughout April on 5 networks on a nationwide basis (see further information below). Building on the work carried out by the ECN and IFES in the previous reporting period to develop a script for a 45 second informational TV PSA with a strong youth, inter-ethnic and broader general public appeal, the ECN voter education team specifically requested that IFES work with Aama Saraswati Movies Ltd., the production company for Tito Satya, the most popular Nepali TV entertainment show.

IFES worked with the ECN and Tito Satya to refine the script, film and edit the TV PSA. The result is a highly polished and compelling informational TV PSA focusing on the key messages of registering at 16 years of age, enumeration and the requirement for a citizenship certificate. This is being screened in parallel with the 20 second TV PSA from March 31, 2011 for an initial four-week period. As by-products of the PSA production process, Tito Satya also gave ECN rough cuts of 60 second and 90 second information videos for use in ECN's forthcoming Electoral Education Centre and other ECN information activities.

In terms of the broadcast schedule for the TV PSAs, following a competitive tendering process IFES worked with a local media company, Media Hub, to put together a strong, but slimmed-down

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<sup>1</sup> Findings from IFES' assessment survey of the pilot phase of voter registration project – July 2010

for electricity load shedding, media schedule that targeted districts and more rural areas and incorporated a mixture of spots for the 45 second informational Tito Satya PSA and the 20 second motivational youth-focused PSA. The schedule provides excellent broad coverage on the channels of Kantipur, Image Channel, Avenue TV, ABC Television and Terai TV, as well as targeting specific groups. Kantipur and Avenue TV (the second and third highest news viewership figures after the State run Nepal Television) will be very effective at targeting the general public, whilst Image TV and ABC will have a high penetration amongst young people and more progressive viewers. The use of Terai TV will specifically focus on reaching audiences in the Terai region and will have a strong local impact. In addition to broadcasting during the news, Media Hub has incorporated TV PSAs in spots in between programs that particularly appeal to young people.

With regard to the 30 second generic radio PSA, IFES worked with the ECN to finalize the script, which provides a generic message about the voter registration process to motivate citizens to take part. IFES contracted a radio production company to produce the PSA in Nepali and 16 local languages. Following a competitive tendering process, IFES selected three radio networks – Communication Corner, Nepal FM and Image FM – to broadcast the PSA from 27 March, 2011 through their local affiliate stations in the relevant local language for four weeks. This combination of networks has resulted in excellent coverage through and value for money. The combined schedules give a balanced blend of radio spots and good nationwide audience penetration (a total of 100 stations and at least four spots per day on each station).

The ECN also requested that IFES support the production of 48,000 voter education bags with voter registration messages, to be used at the stakeholder interactions and distributed at national training events and to local registration place support committees. The successful use of an initial quantity of 8,000 bags was followed by a request from ECN for a further 40,000 bags to be produced within a very short time for dispatch with other ECN voter registration materials between 18 and 26 March. To meet the ECN's deadline, production was split between three suppliers. This further last minute procurement request from ECN added to the print management and quality control pressures caused by the ECN's late requests and specifications for voter registration training and administrative materials.

Finally, IFES' national project coordinator, Suraj Sigdel, took forward IFES' sub-award voter education program. During the reporting period an RFQ, proposal and budget guidelines were prepared and IFES advertised for interested NGOs to submit voter education project proposals targeting marginalized and less likely to register sectors of the population, specifically, Badi women, freed bonded laborers, Raute, Terai dalits, persons with disabilities, youth and women. Following the call for proposals, IFES held a briefing for interested NGOs in Kathmandu and the mid-west of Nepal (for NGOs based in the mid and far-west of the country) and subsequently received 75 applications. IFES has been reviewing and evaluating the proposals, in accordance with a pre-defined evaluation format, and in consultation with the ECN is in the process of short-listing proposals. Due to the time it will take to work with the NGOs to refine the proposals (all of the selected proposals will require significant further work), carry out the pre-award audits and process the selected proposals through IFES and USAID, if Phase 2 of voter registration is completed within the ECN's target of two months (end of May 2011), then the sub awards' voter education activities may need to be re-focused on the later components of the voter registration process.

*Results:* 20 second motivational voter registration TV PSA targeting youth produced in English and Nepali (male and female voiceover versions); 45 second voter registration informational TV PSA produced by, and featuring actors from the famous Tito Satya show; 30 second radio PSA produced

in Nepali and in 16 languages, in accordance with the ECN's five-year strategic plan; TV broadcast schedule negotiated providing coverage on 5 TV networks; radio broadcast schedule negotiated on three radio networks providing coverage through a total of 100 stations covering over 75% of Nepal with at least four spots per day on each station. 48,000 voter education bags produced and distributed at district level stakeholder interactions and to local support and coordination committees. Assessment part completed of 75 project proposals received in response to RFA for CSO voter education proposals targeting marginalized and less likely to register sectors of the population.

#### **4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process**

##### *Activity 4.1 – Ongoing Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment*

*Summary:* IFES continued monitoring, analyzing and reporting on the progression of electoral related developments with regard to the Constituent Assembly and ECN activities. Regular reports on program activity and analysis of the political and electoral environment were provided verbally and in writing to U.S. Embassy officials, USAID and other relevant stakeholders. A major focus this reporting period has been on the provision of regular updates to relevant international stakeholders on the voter registration process, as well as presentations/briefings to the Carter Center.

*Results:* U.S. Embassy and USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments through regular briefings. Regular updates and briefings to relevant international stakeholders on the voter registration process.

##### *Activity 4.2 – Provision of News Clipping Service*

*Summary:* IFES Nepal continued to deliver its daily news clipping service throughout the reporting period. This service is a compilation of online news reports that are relevant to the evolving political and electoral situation in Nepal. News reports are taken from the major news outlets in Nepal, such as the *Kathmandu Post* and the *Himalayan Times* as well as other reputable online sources of news and analysis on Nepali politics.

*Results:* Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

#### **5. Provision for unforeseen windows of opportunity**

Nothing to report this reporting period.

### **IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

During the reporting period the IFES Nepal program has achieved the following major results:

#### **1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework**

##### *Technical Assistance*

- Ongoing day-to-day technical advice to the ECN in the development of the draft political party law and the outline for the electoral law.



- Finalization of a first draft of the ECN's proposed political party law.
- Holding of public consultation workshops in three regional locations resulting in inputs from a wide range of knowledgeable and influential stakeholders on electoral management body, election dispute resolution and electoral systems issues.

#### *Organizational Capacity Building*

- Increased knowledge of the ECN's legal department, civil society and political party stakeholders of international good practices in legal frameworks for political parties and electoral management bodies.

## **2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN**

#### *Technical Assistance*

- Provision of ongoing high-level technical guidance and assistance with the revision of training plans, materials and development of professional training curriculum.
- Production of a portfolio of high quality training materials (82,000 copies of the enumeration handbook, 13,000 copies of the registration handbook, 3,000 copies of the trainers handbook and 250 copies of a 25 minute voter registration training video, as well as a 5 minute summary video) which will support the work of 81,927 ECN staff and Local Support and Coordination Committee members working on the voter registration program.
- High-level technical support of the development and implementation of a cascaded training program that will result in the training of 81,927 ECN voter registration staff and Local Support and Coordination Committee members.
- Training facilitated and funded for 25 master administrative and computer trainers, and 333 DEOs, Assistant DEOs, resource persons and computer staff.
- Provision and deployment of a team of 10 trained financial and administrative support staff to support the logistical and financial aspects of these regional trainings.
- Fast procurement and printing oversight achieved to ensure the production of 5 million enumeration forms, 15,000 voter list registration books, 25,000 voter list record books and 35,000 copies of the voter registration directives.
- All training materials and administrative forms and directives printed and delivered to ECN in time to meet the ECN's distribution schedule.

#### *Organizational Capacity Building*

- BRIDGE 2011 calendar finalized.
- Work underway to prepare the three-day curriculum and materials for the *Political Parties* BRIDGE.
- Development and implementation of the first of a pioneering series of weekly BRIDGE tutorials for ECN staff.
- Nepal selected as one of the pilot countries for the newly developed *Democracy and Governance* BRIDGE program.
- More professional approaches to developing training programs and materials and voter education programs and materials are being adopted by the ECN secretariat.
- RFQ issued for survey of 250 ECN stakeholders.

## **3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education**

- Ongoing provision by IFES staff of voter education capacity building support and excellent working relationship maintained with the ECN voter education team.

- Capacity building support with the development of motivating and targeted 20 second and 45 second TV PSAs and 30 second radio PSAs.
- Creative approach to voter education adopted by the ECN voter education team resulting in free voter education branding in adverts relating to the Bryan Adams concert in major national newspapers, as well as at the concert itself.
- Development of local radio PSAs to be tailored in local areas in the relevant local language to help promote voter education messages specific to that locality.
- Financial and technical support with the development and implementation of a district level stakeholder interaction program in 46 districts resulting in stakeholder commitment to support the voter registration process and promote voter education messages. Data collected for 43 of these events, showing a participation of 2,678 stakeholders.
- 20 second motivational voter registration TV PSA targeting youth produced in English and Nepali (male and female voiceover versions).
- 45 second voter registration informational TV PSA produced by, and featuring actors from the famous Tito Satya show.
- 30 second radio PSA produced in Nepali and in 16 languages, in accordance with the ECN's five-year strategic plan.
- TV broadcast schedule negotiated providing coverage on 5 TV networks.
- Radio broadcast schedule negotiated on three radio networks providing coverage through a total of 100 stations covering over 75% of Nepal with at least four spots per day on each station.
- 48,000 voter education bags produced and distributed at district level stakeholder interactions and to local support and coordination committees.
- Assessment part completed of 75 project proposals received in response to RFA for CSO voter education proposals targeting marginalized and less likely to register sectors of the population.

#### **4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process**

- U.S. Embassy and USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments through regular briefings. Regular updates and briefings to relevant international stakeholders on the voter registration process.
- Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

## **V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

For the next quarter IFES will focus on the following activities:

### **1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework**

- Review and participate in public discussions of political party bill drafts.
- Review and participate in public discussions of electoral bill drafts.

### **2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN**

- Continue to provide technical and capacity building support to the ECN for the implementation of Phase 2 of the voter registration program.
- Provide assistance to the ECN with the preparation of a second voter registration drive in municipalities.

- With UNDP ESP work with the ECN to develop a capacity-building strategy for the ECN and begin implementation of priority areas such as project management and financial planning.
- Continue to work with the ECN to improve the professionalism of training for its staff, particularly with regard to curriculum and training material development.
- Develop and implement a series of briefings for ECN stakeholders, including political parties and media.
- Work with the ECN BRIDGE team to develop and implement a three-day BRIDGE training program for political party representatives.
- Work with the ECN BRIDGE team to develop and implement a three-day BRIDGE training program for media representatives.
- Work with the international BRIDGE facilitator and the ECN BRIDGE team to develop and implement a ten-day train-the-trainer BRIDGE program, focusing on increasing the number of female BRIDGE trainers in Nepal and the region.
- Continue to work with the ECN to develop and implement a six-month tutorial program for core ECN staff using tailored BRIDGE methodology and materials.
- Work with the Nepal BRIDGE partners (World Bank, DanidaHUGOU and International IDEA) and the international facilitation team to develop and implement a pilot seven-day Democracy and Governance BRIDGE program to be held in Doti in the far-west of Nepal
- Continue to work with the ECN to ensure gender inclusion is taken into account in programmatic activities and the implementation of the recommendations from the gender mapping assessment.
- Organize a complementary two-day electoral workshop in Washington DC as part of the UNDP funded ECN five-member delegation study trip to IFE in Mexico.
- Assist the ECN with the development of an attractive, informative and user-friendly voter registration section on the ECN's official website.

### **3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education**

- Continue to provide technical, capacity building and material support to the ECN's voter education campaign for Phase 2 of the voter registration and identification project and the second voter registration drive in municipalities.
- Work with the ECN to develop and implement a voter education strategy and materials to support continuous voter registration.
- Select and begin implementation of sub-awards with local civil society organizations to facilitate the delivery of voter education campaigns for marginalized and less likely to register sectors of the population for Phase 2 of the voter registration program, as well as the ongoing continuous voter registration process.
- Work with the ECN to develop and produce an ECN voter education calendar for nationwide distribution to key stakeholders.

### **4. Monitoring, Analyzing and Reporting on the Electoral Process**

- Ongoing analysis provided to the U.S. Embassy, USAID and other stakeholders on the emerging electoral environment and identification of key issues.

## **VI. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS**

- IFES' work undertaken with the ECN this quarter has been extremely intense and challenging due to the ECN's decision to launch Phase 2. of the voter registration program within a very tight timeframe. IFES' support has been crucial for the operational effectiveness of the voter

registration process and has included support of the cascaded training program and the development and production of 15 different products, some in multiple languages, for a total of 33 deliverables, as highlighted throughout this report.

- Due to IFES having been able to provide significant financial support to the voter registration process and IFES' staff having worked extremely closely with ECN counterparts, the added value of IFES' involvement in the process this reporting period has been clearly demonstrated. As a result, IFES has continued to establish and maintain some excellent relationships and allies within the ECN and has significantly increased the trust of the ECN, with staff members becoming far more receptive to IFES' technical and capacity-building support. IFES will consolidate on these welcome developments in the next quarter and continue to work with the ECN to improve its operational planning and effectiveness.
- Whilst there is no doubt of the major contribution made by and success of IFES' technical and financial support during this reporting period, the ECN continues to face significant problems with its internal planning and data management associated with the voter registration program. The ECN's focus on short-term micro-planning has resulted in a continuous cycle of last-minute decision-making on critical policies and operational requirements. This has proved to be very problematic and time-consuming for IFES, particularly when working to support the ECN with numerous products and materials for Phase 2 of the voter registration process and having to meet extremely tight production and operational deadlines. The ECN has, however, significantly improved its training and community involvement methodologies and implementation processes since the launch of Phase 1 of registration in September 2010, areas where IFES has had significant involvement.
- The lack of a coherent ECN strategy to register the potentially large numbers of people who will not be registered at the conclusion of Phases 1 and 2 of voter registration and the lack of ECN operational planning and capacities for the back-end integration, verification, cleaning and voter list production from the voter data collected in the field create a significant challenge to be addressed by ECN and its supporting organizations in subsequent reporting periods. The ECN has also yet to develop effective strategies to deal with the political issues surrounding voter registration, such as the continuing issues of regional boycotts by political and ethnic groups and likely future issues if the number of voters registered is significantly less than those registered for the Constituent Assembly election.
- IFES has faced some recruitment challenges for key personnel this quarter. The Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant left with no notice early in the reporting period and recruitment of a replacement has been difficult due to lack of suitable available candidates. IFES has recently identified an excellent candidate who is not able to start until the end of May 2011. The national voter education consultant also left early in the reporting period to return to his government position and replacement has been hampered by the ECN's unavailability to participate in the selection process due to the volume of work for Phase 2 of the voter registration program. The interview process will take place early in the next reporting period. The result of the above is that IFES has been understaffed at a crucial time and staff have had to work exceptionally hard to deliver the high quality results that have undoubtedly been achieved.

**National Democratic Institute (NDI)**  
**Quarterly Report**  
**January – March 2011**

**Project Dates: August 3, 2010 to August 31, 2015**  
**Total budget: \$14,422,000 Expenses to date: \$975,143**

## **I. SUMMARY**

In January, 2011 the United Nations Mission in Nepal ended their four-year tenure in country, opting instead to remotely monitor Nepal's peace process for the next three years. A week after their departure, the Maoists party formally relinquished control over the People's Liberation Army. On February 3, Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist leader Jhulanath Kanai was elected prime minister, ending a seven-month political vacuum. Following the vote, disagreements over the distribution of ministerial portfolios delayed the formation of a full cabinet. Progress on drafting the constitution remained slow as a number of contentious issues were still not resolved between the major political parties. Nepal has less than two months before the May 28 deadline to promulgate a new constitution.

As the May deadline to draft the constitution looms, the National Democratic Institute ("NDI" or the "Institute"), along with subgrant partners Internews (IN) and The Asia Foundation (TAF), continued its program to strengthen democratic political processes in Nepal titled "*Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes (SPELP)*." The program seeks to promote political party development, strengthen capacity for citizen oversight of the electoral process and support the institutional strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament (CA) and improve its capacity to address constituent needs.

This quarter, the Institute presented its political party assessment findings to each of its nine political party partners and led planning workshops to evaluate parliamentary committee activities and identify areas for improvement. The Institute also developed qualitative data collection tools for several program outcome indicators and began refining the program framework for midterm and final evaluations as well as the performance management plan. TAF organized the first-wave of youth and women focused town hall meetings to discuss legislation in 45 municipalities across Nepal. Internews conducted a needs assessment of journalists to determine the curriculum for future journalism training courses.

Next quarter, NDI will conduct a week-long multiparty training of trainers for political parties and complete the first round of public hearings and community dialogues in 10 districts. TAF will complete the five-year library development plan and the needs assessment of the Parliament's media center while Internews will conduct four investigative journalism training courses.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

On January 15, the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) ended their four-year involvement in Nepal's peace process and pulled out of the country after political parties agreed not to extend its mandate last September. UN representatives said the mission would continue to monitor the situation remotely for three years. The Special Committee for the Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants took over UNMIN's responsibilities. A week after

UNMIN's departure, the Maoists handed over the second division of the People's Liberation Army to the government, dissociating all of its roughly 20,000 combatants from the party.

On February 3, after more than seven months without an elected prime minister, Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (UML) Chairman Jhalanath Khanal was elected as Nepal's 34<sup>th</sup> prime minister with 368 votes in the Constituent Assembly (CA). The decision of United Communist Party Nepal – Maoists (UCPN-M) chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal to bow out of the seventeenth round of elections in support of the UML candidate ended the deadlock. Nepali Congress (NC) candidate, Ram Chandra Poudel, won 122 votes, while Bijay Kumar Gacchadar, the sitting deputy prime minister from the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), backed by an alliance of regional parties from the Tarai, won 67 votes.

Differences quickly emerged between the UML and their ally UCPN-M over the distribution of ministerial portfolios, resulting in weeks of uncertainty and a delay in the formation of a new government. On March 3, the UCPN-M decided to join the government yet only identified four ministers after internal divisions in their party resurfaced, preventing the UCPN-M from naming all 11 ministers they had been allotted.

On March 12, the UCPN-M workers' union, the All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF), split into three factions following clashes between workers loyal to different leaders of the party: Dahal, Baburam Bhattarai and Mohan Baidya. The ANTUF was an influential wing of the party and its major source of revenue. The UCPN-M decided to dissolve all three of the trade unions as fighting intensified following the formation of parallel organizational structures. The Bhattarai and Baidya factions welcomed the decision to disband the three unions.

Lawmakers of various political parties criticized a report submitted to the Constitutional Committee (CC) by the Committee on State Restructuring and Devolution of State Power. The CA members demanded postponement on deliberations until there was political agreement on the rights of Madheshis, Muslims, and other minority groups. The CC did not resolve 78 crucial issues related to state restructuring and forms of governance.

As the May 28 deadline to finalize the constitution looms, NDI and its partners continued their work to strengthen political parties and improve the functioning of the Constituency Assembly/Parliament as part of its SPELP program. However, unresolved political differences, primarily amongst the top three political parties, continued to hinder progress on concluding the peace process, forming governments and expanding cabinets, and creating the first draft of the new constitution.

### **III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. Political Party Development**

NDI's political party development component is based on continuing coordination and consultation between the Institute and the parties to ensure that all assistance activities respond to the individual needs identified by each party and to any changes in Nepal's political context or legal framework. This quarter, the Institute completed the first draft of a political party baseline assessment report and presented its findings to party partners. NDI also facilitated the creation of the Inter Party Alliance, an inter-party dialogue mechanism, and assisted the Inter Party Women's Alliance to establish seven new district committees.

## *Political Party Baseline Assessment Report and Training Plans*

NDI completed the first draft of a political party baseline assessment report, a compilation of individual party assessments used to design targeted technical assistance and as a reference against which to compare program progress over time. The report combined observations and analysis collected during the assessment meetings with nine political parties in five regions and across 15 districts conducted last quarter. The report also included information obtained through the review of internal political party documents, such as party by-laws and constitutions.

From February 17 to 25, NDI presented its individual assessment findings to party representatives and provided an overview of its analysis of the meetings it had with party members across the country.<sup>2</sup> All parties agreed with and validated the findings and expressed interest in collaborating with NDI.



***Program Director Kenza Aqertit and Senior Advisor for Political Parties Sef Ashiagbor discuss the assessment findings with MJF, N-D representatives.***

Unfortunately, the Institute was only able to meet with Maoist activists in a few districts, which owed mainly to the Maoist plenum in Palungtar occurring at the same time as NDI's assessment mission. After the plenum, NDI was able to conduct a limited number of meetings, but activists deferred to party headquarters to define assistance. Therefore, there were no specific assessment findings to share with the UCPN-M given that all participating party members stressed that the party headquarters would define the assistance. Some of the areas of assistance that the UCPN-M would like to receive from NDI included skills building workshops, particularly those that emphasized consensus-building, conflict resolution, and public speaking.

### *Inter Party Dialogue Mechanism TOR Finalized, Inter Party Alliance Created*

NDI sent letters to political parties requesting them to assign two members of their central committee for representation at the inter-party dialogue mechanism meetings and discussions. The Institute received formal letters with central committee members' nominations from eight political parties, excluding only the UCPN-Maoist.

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<sup>2</sup> NDI met with representatives from Tarai Madesh Loktrantik Party (TMLP), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum, Nepal (MJF-N), Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML), Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum, Nepal Democracy (MJF-N-D), NC, CPN-UML, and UCPN-M.

On February 4, NDI facilitated a working session with the political parties in order to finalize Terms of Reference (TOR) and logistics related to the creation of an inter-party dialogue mechanism (Appendix 1). Ten representatives from NC, CPN-UML, Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML), Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum, Nepal



*IPA board members & NDI staff on the day of formation of IPA*

(MJF-N), Tarai Madesh Loktrantik Party (TMLP) and Sadhvawana Party (SP) took part in this event, with the UCPN-Maoist, and Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum Nepal, Democratic (MJF, N-D) not participating. The UCPN-M stated that it will join the IPA in the near future, while the MJF, N-D's two central committee members were abroad and could not attend.

On March 25, NDI organized a meeting with IPA board members to decide the topic, trainers, date and venue for a consensus-building skills workshop. Members expressed interest in focusing the seminars

on a salient political issue that requires consensus among the parties, namely the debate surrounding the adoption of a presidential, prime ministerial or hybrid system of government. The training was scheduled for April 12 and 13.

Central Committee Members represented in the IPA:

Party	Delegate	Alternate
UCPN-M	Pending	Pending
NC	Chitra Lekha Yadav Treasurer, Central Committee Member (CCM)	Binod Bhattarai Member
CPN-UML	Parsuram Meghi Gurung CCM	Astha Laxmi Shakya Standing Committee Member
MJF,N-D	Bharatendu Mallik Head Training Department, CCM	Hari Narayan Chaudhary CCM
MJF-N	Arjun Thapa CCM	-
TMLP	Brikesh Chandra Lal Vice-President, CCM	Hon. Govinda Chaudhary General Secretary/State Minister
RPP	Bhuwan Pathak Training Dept. Co-coordinator, CCM	Thakur Singh Tharu CCM
CPN-ML	Hon. Neelam KC CCM	Kapil Pokhrel CCM, Secretary of the dept. of International Relations
SP	Hon. Laxman Lal Karna Vice-President/Minister without	Manish Suman CCM



### *Public Speaking Skills Training for IPWA Board Members*

On February 10, NDI organized a one-day public speaking seminar for 18 Inter Party Women's Alliance (IPWA) board members to enhance their communication skills in preparation for local seminars over the next year. Each session included recommendations for improved public speaking and was followed by mock speeches. Both the participants and the trainers provided constructive feedback following each presentation.

### *IPWA Constituent Assembly and Women's Leadership Development Trainings in Districts*

With technical support from NDI, IPWA continued its expansion of district IPWA subcommittees in seven districts, bringing the total number committees to 62 of Nepal's 75 districts. These district committees, comprised of provincial women leaders and activists, have proven instrumental in lobbying for support and funding for women's initiatives at the local level and have provided women with the opportunity to participate in national political debates, receive information on political events, and share training programs designed for women across party lines. IPWA dispatched different teams, each comprised of four IPWA board members to each of the seven districts. An inaugural event took place on the first day of activities, with more than a hundred people from major political parties and government offices, including the chief district officer, local development officer, deputy superintendent of police and women development officer, taking part in each district.



***IPWA UCPN-M practices making a presentation***

Following the district committee formations, IPWA, with logistical support from NDI, organized a three-day local capacity-building workshop for roughly 300 women in each of the seven districts to strengthen the ability of women to advocate for their rights during constitution drafting process and to help IPWA chapters get recognition in their district. The trainings focused on the Constituent Assembly, women's leadership development, concepts on state restructuring, women's rights, and federalism.



***IPWA district sub-committee formation in Salyan***

Rita Magar, UCPN-M, March 28, 2011, Udaypur

*IPWA has helped us to fight together against any form of violence on women. We all have similar problems and issues. Till now, we have been working on our own through our respective parties and organizations. IPWA has provided all women leaders a common forum to act together for common interest. -*

Districts where IPWA formed District Committees:

S.N.	District	Dates	Board Member	Participants
1	Saptari	Jan 1-3	Hon. Kalyani Rizal Hon. Prativa Rana Hon. Neelam Verma Laxmi Shah	45
2	Siraha	Jan 1-3	Hon. Neelam KC Hon. Basanti Jha Sita Mahat Mamta Giri	44
3	Achham	Feb. 20 - 23	Hon. Meena Pandey Hon. Sabitra Bhusal Shashi Shrestha Sita Mahat	40
4	Salyan	Feb. 21 - 24	Hon. Yasodha Subedi Hon. Janak Kumari Chalise Neena Bhetwal Laxmi Devi Gahatraj	40
5	Sankhuwasabha	March 18 - 21	Hon. Meena Pandey Hon. Sabitra Bhusal Sashi Shrestha Sahnez Rehman	40
6	Okhaldhunga	March 21-24	Hon. Yasodha Subedi Hon. Janak Kumari Chalise Tulasa Dahal Laxmi Devi Gahatraj	45
7	Udaypur	March 25-28	Hon. Jaypur Gharti Magar Hon. Kalyani Rizal Neena Bhetwal Subhadra Mainali	40
TOTAL				294

### *Internews partners*

Internews (IN) signed contracts with its three major sub-grantees, Antenna Foundation, Freedom Forum, and the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ). Internews also completed negotiations with Hart Security to organize a TOT workshop and to aid in the development of a security training agenda to be integrated into the investigative journalism workshops scheduled for next quarter.

### *IN Investigative Journalism Trainers*

IN hired Michael McAuliffe, a veteran journalist with Canada's Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He will serve as the investigative journalism trainer and will work with IN sub-grantees on the investigative journalism training component. McAuliffe is based in Bangkok.

IN also hired Mohan Mainali, Chandra Kishore, and Umid Bagchand as lead course instructors for Antenna Foundation's investigative journalism trainings. Mainali, a past director of Nepal's Center for Investigative Journalism, has experience leading investigative training courses in Kathmandu and the outlying districts, while Kishore, a columnist for Kanitpur and the Kathmandu Post,

received investigative training through the Philippines Centre for Investigative Journalism and produced investigative reports for Nepal's Centre for Investigative Journalism. Bagchand, who works for the BBC Nepali Service, received TOT instruction in investigative journalism with the Danish NGO Far Western Media Development.

### *IN Partner Survey*

In March, IN partner Freedom Forum sponsored a convention in Kathmandu for journalists on the subject of Nepal's Right to Information Act. Participants were asked to fill out a needs assessment survey and asked respondents to rank, in order of priority, a list of seven training subject areas (see Appendix 2). While electoral processes ranked last, media ethics topped the training list, likely reflecting journalists' frustration with the poor standard of journalism in Nepal and the desire, on the part of at least some respondents, to have a better sense of what's right, rather than what's common practice.

## **B. Legislative Strengthening**

NDI's legislative strengthening activities are designed to enhance the technical capacity of the legislature and begin to broaden and deepen public participation in legislative processes, during and beyond the current transitional period. This quarter, the Institute organized a parliamentary program planning workshop and formally signed a contract agreement with its local partner Pro Public to begin preparing for public hearings and community dialogues in 10 districts. NDI submitted a draft TOR to the Parliament Secretariat for the formation and functioning of a Parliamentary Steering Committee.

### **Effective Committee Work**

#### *Parliamentary Program Planning Workshop*

On January 21-22, NDI held a residential workshop for the committee chairs, committee secretaries and staff members of the Parliament Secretariat to discuss committee activities, practices and challenges and to identify general areas where NDI's assistance might be needed. Chairs of the Development Committee and the Women, Children and Social Welfare Committee, seven secretaries from seven different committees, and the Secretary General, Secretary, and Joint Secretaries of the Parliament Secretariat attended the workshop.

During the workshop, NDI gave an overview of the Institute's parliamentary program and provided review of its program mandate. Chairs, secretaries and other staff discussed in detail the challenges they faced in their day-to-day work. The participants recommended NDI focus on activities such as capacity building for the chairs and staff, support for written materials related to the parliamentary committees, study



*Committee Chairs and Secretary General during program planning workshop*

missions, report writing skills and library support.

The Institute prepared a detailed report of the workshop to be shared with committee chairs and the Parliament Secretariat. Based on this report, NDI, in coordination with the Parliament secretariat, will further decide on the activities related to the parliamentary committees. NDI is scheduled to meet with chairs of the committees next quarter.

### **Improving the Parliamentary Library**

TAF continued its support of the legislature in developing a five-year library improvement plan. Following a meeting with the secretary general of the Constituent Assembly, TAF worked with Krishna Mani Bhandari, the Chief Librarian of Tribhuvan University, to evaluate the current status of the Parliament Secretariat library and craft the improvement plan. TAF received the preliminary outline of the report and will be working with Bhandari and the secretary general to have the report finalized by the end of April.

### **Constituency Services Program**

Last year, NDI piloted Constituency Service Offices in three districts: Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur. Districts were selected with diverse numbers of representation in the Legislature-Parliament and geographic location. By representation, there is a one-member district (Arghakhanchi), a two-member district (Lalitpur) and a multiple-member district (Dhanusha). Geographically, there is a Tarai district (Dhanusha), Hill district (Arghakhanchi), and a district close to capital city (Lalitpur). On January 4, NDI along with Hon. Neelam K.C, CPN-ML; Mamta Giri, Central Committee Member (CCM), CPN-UML; Sita Mahat, CCM, Samajwadi Prajatantrik Janta Party Nepal visited the constituency service office in Dhanusha. NDI's Constituency Coordinator made a presentation on day-to-day operations and shared information related to the recorded constituents' cases. CA members learned that most of the filed cases were related to needed development work.

### *Constituency Office Review Meeting*

On January 17, NDI held a meeting with the nine CA members from the three constituency office districts of Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur to discuss challenges and lessons learned. CA members expressed their satisfaction with the offices and made valuable recommendations to enhance their effectiveness.

NDI prepared the minutes of the meeting, translated them into Nepali, and shared them with the CA members and constituency office coordinators.



**CA members interact during a constituency services review meeting**

*I would like to thank NDI for extending support in establishing the Constituency Service Office in Arghakhanchi. It has helped me to reach out to my constituents and I believe in the long run, this office will help me to increase the capacity of women leaders in my district. -Hon. Pushpa Bhusal, NC CA member*

### *Follow-up visit after Constituency Services Office Review Meeting*

On March 3, Hon. Farmud Nadaf, Hon. Durgi Devi Paswan and Hon. Pramila Devi Yadav of UCPN-M visited the Dhanusha constituency services office for the first time and learned about cases filed at the office. The office coordinator briefed them on daily operations, his interactions with constituents, cases registered by citizens, actions taken by the office, and relations with local officials. CA members assured the Institute that they would visit the office whenever they traveled to the district, and also requested that the office coordinators inform them about all forthcoming activities.

### **Public Hearings, Community Dialogues and Round Table Discussions**

NDI formally signed a contract agreement with local partner Pro Public as its logistics partner to implement public hearings, community dialogues and roundtable discussions in 10 targeted districts: Dhankuta and Siraha in the eastern region; Nuwakot and Bara in the central region; Syangja and Kapilvastu in the western region; Surkhet and Dailekh in the mid-western region; and Kanchanpur and Doti in the far-western region. NDI has finalized the agenda for the orientation of the participating MPs, district logistics coordinators and moderators. NDI and Pro Public then selected one out of five short-listed NGOs, based on criteria agreed upon last quarter, in each of the 10 districts, as district partner to implement public hearings, community dialogues and round table discussions.

Region	Geographical Coverage	District	Name of the NGO
Eastern	Hill	Dhankuta	Human Rights and Social Awareness Development Center, Nepal
	Tarai	Siraha	Rural Service Team

Central	Hill	Nuwakot	Center for Human Rights, Law and Social Development,
	Tarai	Bara	Rural Area and Agriculture Forest Development Center
Western	Hill	Syangja	Suroyadaya Club
	Tarai	Kapilvastu	Kalika Swabalamban Samajik Kendra
Mid-Western	Hill	Dailekh	Dalit Welfare Organization
	Inner Tarai	Surkhet	Good Governance Club Coordination Committee
Far-Western	Hill	Doti	Rural Women's Development Unity Center
	Tarai	Kanchanpur	Adarshan Nepal

### **Next Generation Parliamentarian Group (NGPG)**

NDI held a series of meetings with core NGPG members Hon. Sunil Babu Pant, NCP-United; Hon. Renu Chand Bhatt, UCPN-M; Hon. Sita Gurung, NC; Hon. Ratna Gurung, CPN-UML; and Hon. Chandrika Prasad Yadav, MJF-N and reviewed the contents of the draft charter, finalized the invitation letter for a larger event, and discussed the list of possible invitees and logistics arrangements. The NGPG is a youth parliamentary group created to enhance the role of the young CA members.

Members developed a timeline and plan for reaching out to the chief whips or whips of all 28 political parties to explain the group's objectives and to garner support in inviting participants. Following individual meetings with the whips, NDI and the core group members met to share the outcomes of the meetings.

### **Parliamentary Media Center**

Following a meeting with the secretary general of the Constituent Assembly, TAF initiated consultation with Binod Bhattarai of The Writing Workshop to outline the framework to conduct a needs assessment study of the Parliament's media center. Binod also met with the Secretary General and prepared a proposal with the following objectives for his assignment: assess the feasibility of establishing a media center at the Parliament complex in Singhadurbar, including technical support and capacity enhancement needs; review the responsibilities, work-flows and management of the Parliamentary spokesperson's office, and recommend changes to enhance long-term public outreach; assess human resource capacity for enhancing public outreach and communications.

TAF also worked with Interface Nepal to design and broadcast four episodes of a 30-minute radio program titled "*Hamro Kanoon*" from 25 different FM radio stations, ensuring an adequate geographical coverage of all regions. The first episode introduced the program and some of its components - weekly parliamentary updates and overview of the parliamentary calendar, clips of floor debates, expert opinions and studio debates on key pieces of legislation - and highlighted the importance of legislation and its relevance to common citizens. The second episode addressed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) bill. The third episode discussed a bill on the issue of disappearance, while the fourth dealt with issues of federal restructuring and ethnic minorities.



## **Interest Group Audits**

TAF worked with Nepal Constitution Foundation (NCF) and a broad coalition of five specific interest groups to identify and review legislative bills that would affect different interest groups. TAF drew on its work conducting similar specific interest group audits of constitutional provisions by marginalized groups convened under Nepal Transition to Peace Forum (NTTP). The coalition was comprised of up to two people from each of the following five interest groups: Dalit, Madheshis, Women, Youth and Janajati.

Initial research on compliance with international standards and legal coherence of three draft bills was conducted. These bills were Racial Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence & Punishment) Bill 2066, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Bill 2066, and Disappearance (Offense & Punishment) Act 2066.

The first interest group audit on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Bill 2066 was conducted during this reporting period. Two more have been scheduled for the second and third week of April. TAF's radio partner was present at the first interest group audit, and has plans to do so in all the following audits, in order to disseminate the information through its weekly radio program.

## **Town Hall consultation with youth and women**

TAF worked with local partner NGOs Samudayak Sarathi (SS), Rural Community Development Service Council (RCDSC) and WomenAct (WA) to conduct the first-wave of youth and women focused town hall meetings to discuss legislative agendas in 45 municipalities across Nepal (See Appendix 3). The first consultations addressed the Domestic Violence Bill, designed to improve criminal justice procedures on domestic violence, and the Truth and Reconciliation Bill, designed to set up a truth and reconciliation commission to deal with post-conflict transitional justice issues. These town hall meetings were attended by 2059 participants, of which 1095 were female. The synopsis of the recommendations brought in from these town hall consultations was then submitted to Legislative Committee Chair Yashoda Subedi Gurung. Hon. Meena Pandey and Hon. Ratna Sherchan were also present at the event.

The three partner organizations, working with legal consultant Mr. Dinesh Tripathi, completed the preparatory work for the next wave of town hall meetings on a bill to curb sexual harassment at the workplace and a bill on disappearances of persons. The next wave of town halls is set to start on April 6.

## **C. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

From late February until mid-March, the Institute conducted a comprehensive M&E baseline assessment. The objectives of the baseline assessment were to refine the program performance management plan (PMP), establish baseline and target indicator values and develop a framework for midterm and final evaluations. The baseline assessment comprised a mixed team: an external lead evaluator; internal M&E evaluator; and programmatic experts from NDI-Nepal and NDI's DC office.

The assessment approach built on existing program information and used field work to check the feasibility of data collection. NDI covered ten districts in Western, Eastern, Central and mid-Western regions and met with various stakeholders including political parties, IPWA district chapters and NGO representatives for public hearings and town hall meetings.

The baseline assessment mapped out a rolling process for the program to arrive at a refined PMP, indicator data collection tools and methods and overall guidelines for NDI-Nepal to utilize these products for program monitoring and management.

NDI developed data collection tools for several planned indicators under each of the parties and parliamentary program components. These tools will rely on qualitative data and analysis and focus on the program's contribution to intended results over the program period.

#### **D. Meetings/Consultations/Events**

##### *Meeting with Rt. Hon. Subash Nembang, Speaker of the House*

On January 20, NDI met with Rt. Hon. Subash Nembang, Speaker of Nepal's Legislature-Parliament along with the Secretary General, the Spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat and the Secretary of the Legislature-Parliament Secretariat. The Institute used the opportunity to brief the Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament Secretariat about NDI in general, the cooperative agreement signed with USAID, different program components and the planned workshop with chairs and secretaries of the committees in Parliament. The Speaker expressed his happiness about NDI's willingness and plans to work with the Parliament, and extended his best wishes for the success of the parliamentary program planning workshop and future programs. He was aware of the Institute as well as its programs, and reflected on his past involvement with NDI. The meeting took place in a cordial and pleasant atmosphere and helped NDI move ahead in formalizing and institutionalizing its relationship with the Parliament.

##### *Meeting with Hon. Khim Lal Devkota*

On January 20, NDI met with UCPN-M CA Member Khim Lal Devkota at his request. Hon. Devkota was appreciative of the work that NDI is doing in Nepal, and requested that the Institute meet and work with the bright, young and prospective youth leaders of his party. He also made a point that his party has two sets of leaders with different approaches: one that is more traditional and looks at external agencies such as NDI with some skepticism; and another group that is more modern and contemporary in its outlook and is open to learning and thereby benefiting from all sectors. The Institute briefed Devkota about NDI's programs and made it clear that the Institute is very willing to work with him or any other of his party members. Also, the Institute told him that NDI-Nepal has not had enough opportunities to work with his party in the past and was therefore exploring ways to forge a proper and formally established coordination mechanism to work officially.

##### *Meeting with Chief Whip/Whip of NC and CPN-UML*

On February 17, NDI met with Hon. Laxman Ghimire, Chief Whip and Hon. Kamala Thapa, Whip of the NC. The Institute used the opportunity to brief the Chief Whip about NDI in general and its parliamentary program component. The meeting specifically discussed the various aspects of the upcoming public hearings, community dialogues and roundtable discussion program to be held in 10 districts. NDI staff briefed them on the logistics of the program, such as selection of NGOs, identification of district-specific issues, structure of the public hearings and selection of parliamentarians. Hon. Ghimire expressed his happiness about NDI's initiatives to reach out to the whips of all the political parties in order to coordinate its program activities. He reiterated that



coordinating with the whips would be ideal for the proper implementation of all program activities related with the parliamentarians.

Similarly, on February 27, NDI met with Hon. Bhim Acharya, Chief Whip and Hon. Tham Maya Thapa, Whip of the CPN-UML. Hon. Acharya also expressed his happiness with NDI's initiatives to reach out to the chief whips or whips of all the political parties in order to coordinate its program activities. He was aware of NDI and its programs and recollected his past involvement with the Institute's leadership development program activities.

#### *Meeting with the Legislature-Parliament Secretariat*

During this quarter, NDI held a series of meetings with both the Secretary General and Spokesperson of the Legislature-Parliament Secretariat to discuss the details of the parliamentary program planning workshop, creation of a steering committee and its composition, ways to move forward on the proposed parliamentary internship program and sharing of resource materials related to the Parliament and committees. The Parliament Secretariat welcomed the Institute's idea of sharing resource materials with the committees related to their specific work areas.

#### *USAID Peace and Governance Partners Meeting*

On February 23, NDI participated in a bi-monthly Peace and Governance Partners Meeting at the U.S. Embassy. The topic of discussion was the constitution drafting process, with a particular focus on current stumbling blocks. Ambassador Scott H. Delisi presided over the meeting. NDI gave a presentation and shared updates and views on the constitutional process and the ensuing possible political scenarios in Nepal. The other participants were USAID's governance program implementers, including TAF and Chemonics.

#### *USAID's Partners Meeting*

On March 3, NDI attended USAID's Partners Meeting in Chitwan, Bharatpur. The day-long meeting discussed lessons learned, best practices and how USAID along with its partners can be more innovative with regard to programs and implementation in the future. NDI contributed to the group discussions and made presentation, highlighting NDI's past activities and efforts that were specially designed and implemented for women leaders both at the grassroots and in the Constituent Assembly. USAID's mission head, Kevin Rushing, was present during the event and accompanied by other directors, deputy directors and a number of local staff members.

#### *IN Local Partners Coordination Meeting*

On March 3, Internews local partner Antenna Foundation organized a coordination meeting with representatives from Freedom Forum, Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), and NDI. The meeting provided an opportunity to introduce the coordinators of the IN, decide on the three districts in which IN will conduct local trainings, and outline upcoming activities.

#### *IN District-level Workshop Approaches*

IN consultant Michael McAuliffe met with Dr. Ram Krishna, one of Kathmandu's leading graduate-level journalism professors, and a representative from Panos, a leading media training institute in Nepal, to discuss different approaches to investigative journalism workshops at the district level.

### *Meeting with Honorable Ram Chandra Poudel from Nepali Congress (NC)*

On March 8, NDI met with Hon. Ram Chandra Poudel, Vice-President and Parliamentary party leader of NC. The Hon. Poudel highlighted his party's future training strategies and made an inquiry about the Institute's plan for providing support to NC. He also expressed his appreciation for the Institute's publication, "Minimum Standards for the Democratic Functioning of Political Parties," and recommended designing training components based on the various components in this publication. NDI has been receiving positive feedback from its political party partners following the distribution of the Nepali version of the publication. There continued to be numerous requests from political parties for this publication, and several parties reported using it as a reference during their district level trainings.

### *Face to Face Program Organized by IPWA*

On March 9, NDI attended an event organized by the IPWA. The event was a half-day long "Face to Face Interaction" program with political leaders in Kathmandu. Different political party representatives discussed the issues of child marriage and dowry. Guest speakers of the program included Prem Bahadur Singh, Samajwadi Janta Dal Party, Parshuram Khapung, RPP, Dambar Bahadur Shrestha, CPN-ML, Hon. Aatma Ram Shah, MJF-N, Bamdev Gautam, CPN-UML and CP Gajurel, UCPN-M. The event was supported by CARE NEPAL, and was attended by roughly 120 participants.

### *Meeting with Chief Whips and Whips of Different Political Parties*

On March 10, NDI organized a breakfast meeting with chief whips and whips of different political parties at Hotel Shangri-La. The meeting provided a platform to introduce NDI and its parliamentary program components with a major focus on public hearings, community dialogues and roundtable discussions program and collect feedback to incorporate into the program design. The Chief Whips of MJF-N, TMLP, TMLP-N, CPN-ML and RPP and the Whips of MJF-N, and CPN-ML attended the meeting.

### *M&E USAID Exit Meeting*

On March 17, the M&E assessment team, along with Institute staff, had a brief exit meeting with USAID Democracy and Governance (D&G) team. The meeting covered the following topics: review of team members and assessment objectives; overview of M&E assessment work in Nepal; presentation of methods to track higher level outcome indicators for key program components; and next steps.

## **IV. RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### ***Objective 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.***

- NDI discussed its political party assessment findings with party representatives who validated the assessment findings and expressed interest in committing to a technical assistance program.
- The Institute developed individual training plans and Memoranda of Cooperation (MOCs) for its political party partners. The plans were presented to the parties and included a series of six national and regional level Trainings of Trainers (TOTs) to be organized on a multiparty basis, as well as consultations and workshops with parties on an individual basis. The topics of the

consultations were agreed upon by each party based on their priorities. Parties will sign the finalized MOCs in the next quarter. Both the first year training plan and MOC represent a good planning tool and clear road map for assistance and commitment from the parties as well as the Institute.

- NDI facilitated and supported the creation of an inter-party dialogue mechanism, the Inter Party Alliance, which aims at enhancing consensus and collaboration among political parties on cross-cutting issues. In addition to finalizing the TOR, participants agreed to name the group the Inter Party Alliance (IPA) and have the parties chair the monthly meetings on a rotational basis. Participants also discussed potential topics including political party law, coalition-building, comparative information and analysis of different electoral systems and internal party democracy and transparency. The IPA will generate a significant framework for the discussion of a number of contentious but significant issues that are important in the democratization of Nepal, including, but not limited to, political party and electoral law, political party code of conduct, coalition-building, and party transparency and inclusiveness.
- NDI supported IPWA in expanding into seven additional districts and trained nearly 300 women through capacity-building workshops. District level members not only developed their ability to effectively present local issues to CA/Parliament members, but they also produced cohesive lobbying and advocacy bodies to promote and advance women's issues. NDI has now created IWPA district committees in 62 of 75 districts.

***Objective 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions.***

- NDI held a meeting with the CA members from the three constituency office. The meeting provided an opportunity for CA members to learn from each other's experiences and adopt successful strategies implemented by a particular CA member. Following the review meetings CA members from Dhanusha district began to regularly visit their constituency office and requested information about registered cases. During their visits, CA members discussed the cases which included building of public toilets in Janakpur town, road construction from Janakpur to Jatahi VDC and road maintenance of Fulghava VDC. CA members developed plans for reaching out to concerned agencies to follow-up. The Institute will follow-up on the registered cases.
- CA Members requested districts profiles of Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur from the Constituency Office Coordinators. Profiles provide information and data disaggregated by population, literacy, ethnicity and economic status and have been updated to track information at the VDC and constituency level.
- The Institute established a partnership with the Chief Whips or Whips of major political parties to coordinate the upcoming public hearings, community dialogues and roundtable discussions, and developed criteria for the selection of local NGOs.

## **V. EVALUATION**

Unresolved political differences, primarily among the top three political parties, continued Nepal's political stalemate, affecting major decisions such as concluding the peace process, forming governments, expanding cabinets and creating the first draft of the new constitution. The tension seen in the political process also manifested in the Parliament's work, and there were several

occasions when the meetings at the Parliament were obstructed or rescheduled, committees had to work during the unscheduled hours and commitments of the secretariat staff could not be kept. Apart from serving as the apex legislative body, Nepal's Parliament/Constituency Assembly has the added responsibility of drafting a new constitution, and as a result, the staff members who otherwise serve only the Parliamentary committees have also served the committees of the CA for more than two and half years now. As the priority of the nation shifted more toward writing a new constitution, the entire legislative process including the committees' work slowed down.

These issues have hindered NDI's coordination with the Parliament Secretariat. Lack of availability of the secretariat staff, more so of the Secretary General, has impacted the formation of the Parliamentary Steering Committee and other plans of implementation. However, amidst all the uncertainties, the enthusiasm in the political parties, MPs, Committee Chairs and the Secretariat staff remained high, especially in their commitment to work with NDI or to be involved in NDI supported activities. For example, following the parliamentary program planning workshop, Hon. Jitendra Prasad Sonar, Development Committee Chair said, "This is the first meeting where we chairs and staff are sitting together to discuss the issues of the committees of the Parliament. We were never oriented on the roles of the committees of the Parliament. Thanks to NDI for providing this opportunity."

The first series of introductory meetings with the chief whips or whips of political parties such as NC, CPN-UML, MJF-N, TMLP, TMLP-N, CPN-ML and RPP was equally positive. During these meetings, the chief whips or whips expressed willingness to collaborate with NDI. However, the chief whips of major political parties such as NC, and CPN-UML were reluctant about the idea of forming the Next Generation Parliamentarian Group. NGPG core members also met the UCPN-M chief whip separately, and it was reported that he too was hesitant towards the formation of youth group in the Parliament. Political parties view such groups as playing a potentially destructive role in the constitution making process. In addition, the Parliament currently does not have the resources to support such groups. The Institute and NGPG core members are working towards organizing a learning and capacity building workshop for the youth parliamentarians and similar activities to gradually change the perception of political parties towards such groups.

The CSO program review meeting conducted this quarter showed that the CSO of the one-member district (Arghakhanchi) and two-member district (Lalitpur) worked well. However, the multi-member district (Dhanusha) has had some problems. Some of the reasons identified for this were lack of coordination among parliamentarians from various political parties, a lack of commitment on the part of the parliamentarians towards the office, and parliamentarians who are primarily based in Kathmandu and did not visit the office with any frequency. Therefore, a consultation meeting was organized with CA members to develop strategies to improve its effectiveness. The discussion was instrumental in collecting valuable recommendations from the parliamentarians. In addition, there was a renewed commitment and interest from the CA members, a pledge to be more cooperative, and a realization of the significant asset the CSO is to the Dhanusha representatives. Following the consultation meeting, they began to visit the office more frequently.

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

### **A. Political Party Development**

- A final copy of the *Political Party Baseline Assessment Report* will be completed and will take into account additional information and findings of the baseline assessment team that took place in March.

- Development of a training manual for Phase 1 of the national and regional level TOTS.
- The Institute will organize a seven-day multiparty national TOT-Phase I in Kathmandu. The training modules in Phase 1 will include:
  - 1) Training Skills
  - 2) Role and Function of Political Parties in a Democratic System
  - 3) Conflict Resolution
  - 4) Public Speaking
  - 5) Working with Party Branches
- The Institute will facilitate a two-day skills-building residential workshop to IPA board members about consensus-building on presidential, prime ministerial and hybrid systems.
- IPWA will expand its district committees in at least four districts and conduct capacity building trainings for the newly elected women members.
- IN partner Hart Security will hold a three-day TOT for Antenna Foundation's trainers. The course will focus on developing a one-day module to be implemented and integrated with Antenna's two-week investigative training program.
- IN partner Antenna Foundation has scheduled the first four investigative journalism workshops for the following dates (see Appendix 4):
  - 1) Course 1                      May 2 – 12                      Kathmandu
  - 2) Course 2                      May 15 – 25                      Rajbiraj
  - 3) Course 3                      June 5 - 15                      Sindhupalchowk
  - 4) Course 4                      June 19 – 29                      Rajbiraj

## **B.        Legislative Strengthening**

- NDI will hold a workshop for the NGO representatives of the 10 targeted districts to orient them on how to effectively implement the public hearings and community dialogue program. Topics will include moderation skills, the organization of public hearings and community dialogues, and ways to correspond and engage with representatives.
- NDI will organize workshops for the CA members of 10 targeted districts in order to brief them on the organization of issue-based public hearings and community dialogues.
- NDI and Pro Public are finalizing the TOR for district level NGOs and collecting curriculum vitae for potential candidates for district logistics coordinator, moderator and district logistics assistant in 10 targeted districts. These NGO representatives will be trained on how to conduct public hearings, community dialogues and round table discussions. A two-day residential training will be held in Kathmandu next quarter.
- NDI and Pro Public will conduct the first round of public hearings and community dialogues in 10 districts.

- NDI, as requested by Dhanusha CA members, is planning wider publicity of the CSO through local FM Radio in order to encourage constituents to visit and register their complaints, opinions and views. The radio script informing the objectives of the CSO has been finalized and Radio Mithila 100.8 MHz of Janakpur has been identified as the potential media partner.
- NDI in collaboration with Mithila FM recorded the radio jingle in Maithili language. An approximately 1 minute radio jingle will be on air starting in April. It will be aired a minimum of three times a day and will be placed two times during the super prime time news bulletins (one in the morning and one in the evening) and at least one time at the discretion of the radio station.
- NDI will organize constituency outreach events in the three constituency offices in Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur.
- TAF will complete the five-year library development plan in the coming quarter and initiate strategic involvement based on the recommendations provided by the research consultant and the funds allocated under CEPPS.
- TAF will complete the needs assessment of the Legislative Parliament's media center in the coming quarter and initiate strategic involvement in providing technical and material assistance as identified by the research consultant and the funds allocated under CEPPS.
- TAF will continue to closely work with SS, WA, RCDSC in conducting the next wave of town hall meetings in the coming quarter.
- TAF will continue to work closely with NCF and the interest group in identifying and auditing relevant legislation in the coming quarter.
- TAF will continue to closely work with Interface Nepal in identifying the relevant legislations and provide assistance in producing and broadcasting the weekly radio show.
- TAF will continue to work closely with all its component partners to ensure close coordination between the various activities

### **C. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Conclude baseline assessment analysis and coordinate through CEPPS the submission of a revised M/E Plan to USAID.
- NDI will build an M&E data management system to store and manage program data gathered through the life of the program.
- Develop data collection and analysis tools and protocols in coordination with sub-grantees, TAF and Internews, for ongoing program management, performance monitoring, and decision making.

## **VII. APPENDICES**

- 1) NDI – IPA TOR
- 2) Internews Journalist Needs Assessment Survey
- 3) TAF list of Town Hall meetings
- 4) Internews Journalism Course Curriculum and Schedule